

My Bible History - Old Testament



by Bishop Louis Laravoire Morrow

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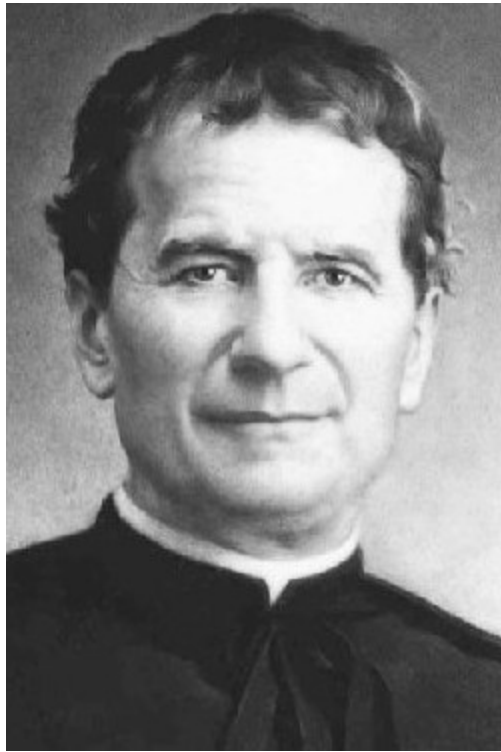
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Dedication



**To Saint John Bosco
Blessed Friend of Youth
this volume, inspired by his own Bible History
for the Young is Dedicated
on the Day of his Solemn Canonization
Easter Sunday, 1 April 1934**

Foreword

Holy Scripture consists of those books which were written under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and recognized by the Church as the Word of God. The word *Bible* is used to refer to Holy Scripture, because in Greek the word signifies *book*, and Holy Scripture is the Book of books, whose Author is God Himself.



There are seventy-two books in the Bible, written by different persons at different times, but all under the inspiration of God. The first books were written by Moses about 1500 B.C.; the last one, the Apocalypse, was written by Saint John the Evangelist about 100 A.D. Those books which were written before the coming of Our Lord Jesus Christ form the Old Testament or Old Law; while those written after His coming form the New Testament or New Law.

It is very important to bear in mind that it is through the Holy Catholic Church alone, which was instituted by Our Lord Jesus Christ, that we can know what books are to be recognized as having been inspired by God. It is likewise important to remember that, as many passages in Holy Scripture are difficult to understand, and may be subject to different interpretations if left to the discretion of each individual, the Catholic Church has the assistance of the

Holy Ghost to point out and teach the correct interpretation of all matters concerning doctrine or morals.

"MY BIBLE HISTORY" aims to narrate the principal events and teachings of Holy Scripture in language that can be understood by all. The accompanying illustrations will help to explain and visualize the events. In order that the reader may have an idea of the time when the principal events occurred, we indicate the approximate date in some of the stories. It must, however, be borne in mind that in the first eras of human history, people had neither the interest nor the means to calculate time in terms of consecutive years and centuries. This is why dates given are merely approximate, according to the illustrious Bible teacher Calmet. These computations do not pretend to any exactness, especially for events occurring before the time of King David.

The reader of **"MY BIBLE HISTORY"** will notice the frequent use, in the Old Testament stories, of the words "type" and "figure". These words refer to a person, thing, or action having its own absolute and independent existence, but at the same time intended by God to prefigure a future person, thing, or action. For example, in the story "Jonas and the Fish", we find Jonas staying three days in the fish. He was a *figure* of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Who remained three days buried in the earth. In the chapter "Manna in the Wilderness", manna was a *type* of the Blessed Sacrament which is the food of our souls in the desert of life.

Since the Bible is the Word of God, it aims to teach us how to come nearer to Him, and to walk along His ways. in the same spirit, **"MY BIBLE HISTORY"** contains many moral teachings which the Bible intends to give. Many of these salutary reflections were taken from the Bible History prepared by Saint John Bosco, the Friend of Youth. As **"MY**

BIBLE HISTORY" is mainly for the young, this has moved us to dedicate this work to Saint John Bosco, on the day of his solemn canonization, Easter Sunday, 1 April 1934.

Every Catholic recognizes the importance of the Bible. Our Holy Mother Church desires her children to read and study it often, in order to learn all contained in it. Her reverence for the Bible is shown by the fact that the principal parts of the Mass, the prayers in the Breviary used daily by priests, and the prayers in liturgical ceremonies, come from the Bible.

"MY BIBLE HISTORY" is not the work of any one person. Several cooperated in bringing about the publication of this work. It is to these self-sacrificing and zealous friends, who for the love of God have aided in making His Word known, that we render our sincere acknowledgments and thanks.

We hope that **"MY BIBLE HISTORY"** will help disseminate the Word of God, Holy Scripture, that it may be the source of salvation for many a soul.

Manila, Easter Sunday, 1 April 1934. - *L L.R. M.*

My Bible History - Old Testament #01

- Creation

God has always lived. He had no beginning, and He will have no end.

There was a time when only God lived. Then out of nothing, by his almighty power, He made everything - heaven, and earth, all things in heaven and on earth.



Out of nothing God created the earth. At first it was dark and covered with water. Then God said, "Be light made," and at once light appeared. God separated light from darkness. He called the light Day, and the darkness Night. This was all done the first day.

On the second day, God commanded, "Let there be a sky to divide the waters." The blue sky was made, and God called it Heaven.

On the third day, God spoke: "Let the waters under Heaven be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear. Let this dry land bring forth grass and trees and plants of every kind." As God said, so everything was done. He called the waters Seas, and the dry land He called Earth.

On the fourth day, God created the sun, the moon and the stars. He said, "Let these heavenly lights separate day from night; let them mark the days, the seasons, and the years."

On the fifth day, God created the fishes and other creatures that were to live in the Seas. He also made birds and other creatures that were fly in the sky. God blessed them, saying, "Increase and multiply."

On the sixth day, God made all the animals that were to live on the ground. Then God said, "I shall make man in My image. I shall make man to rule over all the things I have created." God formed man out of the dust of the earth. Then He breathed into him a soul that will never die.

And God saw all the things that He had made, and they were very good.

On the seventh day, God rested from His work. He blessed the day and made it holy.

Catholics are obliged to keep Sundays and holy days of obligation holy by hearing Mass and abstaining from servile work.

My Bible History - Old Testament #02

- The Battle of the Angels

God made Angels to adore Him and carry out His commands. They are pure spirits, that is, they have souls only, and no bodies. This is why we cannot see Angels.

God wanted the Angels to live forever in heaven with Him. He made them so beautiful that we cannot imagine their loveliness. When He made them, they were all perfectly beautiful, good and holy. They were in the grace of God, and very happy with Him.



Of all the Angels, the most wonderful for his glory and beauty was Lucifer (which means "Bearer of Light"). This beauty and glory had all come from God. But instead of blessing his Creator, Lucifer became very proud of himself. At last he came to think of himself as great as God.

Lucifer cried out against God, "I will not obey!" Having tempted other Angels to join him, he led them in revolt against God, crying, "I will be like the Most High!"

Now the Archangel Michael love God and was faithful. He cried, "Who is like God?" He called good Angels to join him against Lucifer and his wicked angels, and a great battle took place. Michael and his good angels drove Lucifer and the wicked ones into hell.

Lucifer, who was all glory and beauty, is now called Satan, the devil, the demon. No one can imagine his wickedness and ugliness, and the bad angels in hell are devils like their head, Satan.

God rewarded the good angels with everlasting happiness with Him in Heaven. But God punished Satan and the other devils in hell forever.

There are nine choirs of Angels: seraphim, cherubim, dominations, thrones, virtues, principalities, powers, archangels and angels.

Among the angels, the ones especially given charge of men are the Guardian Angels. They guard and protect us, and inspire us with good thoughts. They are always near us; we should always try to listen to their advice, and pray to them in all dangers. Each of us has a Guardian Angel into whose care God gave us, because He loves us so much.

Devils may tempt us to sin, but with the grace of God, we can fight against these temptations. We must fly from temptations and occasions of sin.

My Bible History - Old Testament #03

- Adam and Eve in Paradise

God called the first man Adam. God loved him, and planted a beautiful garden for him to live in. This was the Garden of Eden, or Paradise.

In Paradise God put all kinds of trees, plants, flowers and fruits. He made a clear river that flowed through it. He brought beasts and birds before Adam that he might give them names.



This, in the middle of the Garden, God planted two trees: the Tree of Life, and that Tree of Knowledge of good and evil. Calling Adam, God said to him, "You may eat of the fruit of every other tree in the Garden. But you must not eat the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil. If you eat of it, you shall surely die."

God in His goodness and wisdom wished to give Man the precious gift of liberty or free will. This is his freedom to choose between good and evil. If man chooses the good, he will receive an eternal reward in Heaven. But if he disobeys God and chooses evil, he will be punished in hell. God is good, but He is also just: He rewards the good and punishes the wicked.

Then God said to Himself, "It is not good for man to be alone. Let Me make a companion like unto him."

So God put Adam to sleep, and taking one of his ribs, formed out of it a woman. When Adam awoke, God gave him the woman for his companion. She was called Eve, meaning "Mother of all the living."

Adam said to Eve, "This now is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh."

In this way God instituted the ordinance of marriage in the Garden of Paradise. When Jesus Christ came on earth, He raised marriage to the dignity of a Sacrament. He honored it by His presence and first miracle at Cana of Gaililee.

Adam and Even were very happy in Paradise. The Tree of Life kept them free from sickness and death. They had everything their hearts could desire. Best of all, they had the love of God: they were in God's grace.

The Tree of Life is a figure of the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, of which it is written: "He who is fed by it shall live forever."

My Bible History - Old Testament #04

- Man's First Sin

In Paradise, Adam and Eve had everything their hearts could desire. They felt neither pain, nor want, nor sorrow. To them God had promised immortality: as long as they were obedient, they would not die.

But Satan was jealous, and resolved to tempt them to disobey God. For this he made use of the serpent.



One day, Eve was near the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil. The devil in the serpent asked her, "Why has God commanded you that you should not eat of every tree of Paradise?"

Eve answered, "Of the fruit of the trees that are in Paradise we do eat. But of the fruit of the Tree which is in the midst of Paradise, God has commanded us that we should not eat, and that we should not touch it, lest perhaps we die."

But the devil, tempting Eve, said, "No, you shall not die. God knows that in the day you eat of it, your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be like gods, knowing good and evil."

Eve did not turn away from the tempter, as she should have done at once. She listened to him, and so was led into sin. She looked at the Tree, and at the fruit. She thought that she would like to be as great as God.

If we do not want to commit sin, we must fly immediately from all occasions of sin. We must not do as Eve did.

At last Eve wanted to eat the fruit, although she knew that God had forbidden it. She plucked the fruit and ate it. They knowingly and willfully disobeyed God: the committed sin.

As soon as Adam and Eve had eaten, they felt how ugly their sin was. They were filled with shame and fear. They sewed together fig leaves, and made themselves clothes to cover their nakedness.

When Adam and Eve heard God walking in the Garden, they ran to hide themselves among the trees. They foolishly thought that they could hide from Him.

By this sin, our first parents lost the grace of God. Since then all their children have been born without the grace of God, and with original sin. Original sin is washed away in the Sacrament of Baptism.

My Bible History - Old Testament #05

- The Punishment for Disobedience

In the Garden God called Adam, "Where are you?"

Adam came forth from his hiding place and answered. "I heard Your voice in Paradise, and I was afraid."

God asked Adam why he had eaten of the forbidden fruit. Adam tried to excuse himself, saying, "The woman whom You gave me to be my companion gave me of the Tree, and I did eat."



God turned to Eve and asked, "Why have you done this?"

Eve replied, "The serpent deceived me, and I did eat."

Then God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this thing. you are cursed among all cattle and beasts of the earth." God condemned the serpent to crawl upon the ground and to eat dust always.

God said to the serpent. "I will put enmities between you and the woman, and your seed and her seed. She shall crush your head." In these words God foretold the coming of a Redeemer to save mankind from the devil, a Redeemer to be born of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

God told Eve that for her disobedience she should bring forth her children in sorrow and pain, and that she should

always be subject to her husband.

Turning to Adam, God rebuked him and said, "Cursed is the earth in your work. With labor and toil you shall eat thereof all the days of your life. Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to you. You shall eat the herbs of the earth. In the sweat of your face shall you eat bread till you return to the earth out of which you were taken. For dust thou art. and into dust thou shalt return."

God then clothed Adam and Eve in garments of skins, and sent them out of Paradise. At the gate He placed Cherubim with a flaming sword turning every way, to prevent their return.

Because of their disobedience, our first parents were driven out of Paradise into a world of suffering.

All the miseries we suffer on earth are the results of our first parents' sin and of our own sins. They are the punishment for breaking God's commands.

My Bible History - Old Testament #06

- Cain and Abel

Cain and Abel were the first children of Adam and Eve. Cain grew up to be a farmer, Abel became a shepherd. Cain was envious and cruel; Abel was loving and kind.

One day, Cain and Abel both offered gifts to God. Cain offered some fruit and grain that he had raised. Abel brought some little lambs from his flock.



God looked into the heart of Cain and saw that it was full of wickedness. He therefore refused Cain's gift.

But when God looked in the heart of Abel. He saw it filled with goodness. He therefore accepted Abel's gift with pleasure.

This made Cain more jealous than ever. He made up his mind to kill Abel.

Some time later. Cain asked Abel to go with him into the fields. When they had walked some distance. and there were no other people near. Cain struck down his brother Abel and killed him.

God saw everything that Cain had done. He asked Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?"

Cain tried to hide his sin from God.

He answered, "I know not. Am I my brother's keeper?"

God rebuked him. saying. "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood cries out to Me. Cursed shall you be upon the earth that has received your brother's blood. When you plow it, it shall not yield to you its fruit. You shall be a wanderer and a vagabond upon the earth."

Hearing how he was to be punished. Cain cried out in despair, "My sin is too great to be pardoned! I must hide myself from Your face. Everyone that finds me will kill me."

But God answered, "No, it shall not be so. Whoever kills Cain shall be punished seven-fold."

And God set a mark upon Cain as a sign. so that no one should kill him. Cain went forth to wander over the earth. and to suffer for his sin. His children also suffered for their father's sins.

We should not be like Cain who tried to hide his sins from God. If we fall into sin, we should at once be sorry for our sin, go to Confession, and resolve never to sin any more.

My Bible History - Old Testament #07

- The Ark of Noah

When Adam and Eve learned how Cain had murdered Abel, they were very sad. God, taking pity on them, sent them another son. Whom they called Seth. This son grew up to be a good man. The children of Seth honored God and lived according to His commands. Because of their goodness, they were called children of God.



The children of Cain, however, grew up full of wickedness. They neither sought God, nor wished to serve Him. After a while the children of Cain began to marry the children of God. Then the sons and daughters born to these parents also became wicked. At last most of the men on earth turned evil, because of the children of Cain.

When God saw how men forgot and disobeyed Him, He was full of sorrow. He said, "I am sorry that I ever created the earth. Now men are unclean because of sin. I will destroy them all, and all other living creatures. I will wipe every living thing from the face of the earth."

Among the wicked people there lived a good man. Noe, who still loved God. So God said to him. "Men have turned away from Me, and have defiled themselves and the good earth that I created. They no longer seek Me nor obey My commands. I will destroy them. I will send rain for forty days.

A great flood shall rise to wipe away every living creature from the face of the earth. But because you honor and obey Me, I shall spare you. Go, therefore, and build an ark of wood. When it is finished, take your wife, your sons, and their families, and enter the ark that you may be saved."

Noe did all that God had commanded. He built an ark of wood. It was three stories high. and was divided into little rooms. It took Noe over one hundred years to build it. Then, with his family, Noe entered the Ark. God also told him to carry enough food, and to take with him seven pairs of certain animals, and two pairs of the other animals. When all of them had entered, the door was closed and fastened.

What a fearful thing sin must be, that God should have wished to punish it in such a terrible manner!

My Bible History - Old Testament #08

- The Great Flood

After the closing of Noe's Ark. God sent the rain in torrents upon the earth. For forty days and forty nights heavy rain fell and flooded the land.

The waters rose higher and higher till even the mountains were covered. Every living thing - bird, beast and man - was drowned. All living things died except those who were in the Ark.



After forty days the rain stopped, but the waters remained on the earth for one hundred and fifty days. Then a wind blew over the earth. and the flood went down. The waters sank away from the earth, until one day the Ark stood still. It had come to rest on the top of a mountain.

Noe waited forty days. Then he opened the window of the Ark and sent out a raven. The raven flew back and forth over the waters, but did not return to the Ark.

Then Noe sent out a dove. Finding no place on which to alight, the dove returned to the Ark. After another week. Noe again sent out the dove. In the evening it returned with a green olive branch in its beak. By this Noe knew that the waters were leaving the earth.

After one more week, Noe sent forth the dove a third time. It did not return, and Noe knew that the waters were no longer

covering the earth. And so Noe with his wife, his sons, their families, and all living creatures went forth out of the Ark on to the dry land.

Noe was very grateful to God. He built an altar, and upon it offered a sacrifice of thanksgiving to God. God was pleased with Noe and promised, "The waters will never again become a flood to destroy all living things. This is the sign of our agreement: I will put the rainbow in the sky. Whenever the rainbow appears, I will remember My promise."

Then God blessed Noe and all the other creatures that had been saved. He said, "Increase and multiply, and replenish the earth."

The Ark of Noe was the figure of the Catholic Church founded by Our Lord Jesus Christ, the one place of refuge in which We may find salvation.

My Bible History - Old Testament #09

- The Tower of Babel

Noe had three sons - Sem, Cham, and Japhet. They helped him take care of his vineyard.

Once, when the time came to gather the grapes, Noe drank too much wine, because he did not know its strength. Becoming very drunk, he lay exposed in his tent.



Cham saw him. Instead of covering his father, he went laughing to tell his brothers. Sem and Japhet, filled with filial love went to where Noe slept, and walking backwards, covered their father.

When Noe awoke and learned what had taken place, he cursed Cham's descendants through Chanaan, Cham's son. But he blessed Sem and Japhet.

Noe lived for about nine hundred and fifty years. After his death many of his descendants forgot God. They became proud and ungrateful. They were so numerous that many families had to move to distant lands. However, before separating, they resolved in their pride to build a city and tower that would reach heaven.

Their pride was quickly punished. God confounded their speech; that is, He made them talk in different languages. Before that time, they had only one language. Now they could not understand each other. They therefore gave up

their plan of the tower, which they had already started. This is why the tower is called Babel, because of the confusion of tongues. The builders scattered all over the earth.

The descendants of Sem, from whom the Israelites sprang, spread over the greater part of Asia. Those of Cham settled in Africa, while those of Japhet passed over to Europe.

In their wanderings the foolish work-men of Babel carried with them a remembrance of the Flood and of the existence of a Supreme Being. This is why even among uncivilized tribes we find these beliefs. however distorted by ignorance and superstition.

Babel, a monument of pride, destroyed the unity of language. Unbelief or heresy, the result of pride, destroys the unity of faith.

My Bible History - Old Testament #10 - The Promise to Abraham

At Haran, in the midst of a wicked world, there lived a good man named Abram. He was chosen to carry on the knowledge of the true God, Whom others had forgotten.

Therefore God called Abram and said to him, "Abram, leave your country, and go to the Land of Chanaan."



Abram did as God commanded him. He was obedient, although it was hard for him leave his old home and his friends. With his Wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, and his servants and flocks, he went to Chanaan.

To reward him, God made him this promise: "I will give you and your children the land of Chanaan. You shall be the father of a great people. Through you all nations shall be blessed."

From that time on, because God had promised the Land of Chanaan to Abram, it was called "The Promised Land."

God blessed Abram. In the following years He gave him great riches. His flocks increased rapidly. Yet, though Abram was already very old, God had not given him a son. Remembering how God had promised that he should be the father of a great people, Abram prayed fervently. He asked. "Shall I die without children, shall I have to give all my riches to the son of one of my servants?"

God heard Abram's prayer, and in the night called him out of his tent and said: "Look up, Abram, and try to count the stars in the sky, if you can. Your children and your children's children shall be as numerous as those stars. They shall inherit this land that I promised to you."

Abram believed all that God told him, and waited patiently for a son. One day, God said to him, "Your name from now on shall be Abraham, and not Abram, because you shall be the father of many nations. And your wife's name shall be Sara, and no longer Sarai, because she shall be the mother of princes. For I will fulfill My promise to you, and will give you a son. I will bless him. He shall be the father of kings and nations. You shall name him Isaac."

Because Abraham obeyed whatever the Lord commanded him, God blessed him all his days.

My Bible History - Old Testament #11

- The Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrha

In time the flocks of Abraham and Lot increased, and quarrels arose between their herdsmen. Abraham loved peace, and therefore suggested that he and Lot separate. Lot went to live in Sodom, while Abraham remained at Hebron.



One day three strangers came to Abraham's tent. He knew at once that one represented the Lord and that the other two were angels. He went with them some distance on their way to Sodom.

God told Abraham that He was about to destroy the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrha because their people had committed many impurities.

Abraham was filled with pity for the people. He asked, "Will You destroy the just with the wicked? If there be fifty just men there, will you spare the cities for their sake?"

And the Lord said, "I will."

But Abraham continued interceding for the cities. Finally God promised, "I will not destroy them for the sake of ten just men." Abraham then returned home, but the two angels went on to Sodom.

The two angels went to the house of Lot. He received them gladly. But when the people learned of the arrival of the strangers, many surrounded Lot's house, wishing to do them harm. However, the wicked plan did not work out because the people were miraculously struck with blindness, and could not enter. The angels told Lot of the coming destruction of Sodom, in which there were not even ten just men.

Early the next morning the angels led Lot, his wife, and his two daughters out of the city. The angels warned them not to look back, but to flee the place at once. Out of curiosity, Lot's Wife looked back, and was turned into a pillar of salt.

God rained brimstone and fire upon Sodom and Gomorrha. Everything - people, cattle and houses - was destroyed. The place Where the cities were located was turned into a lake, what we now call the Dead Sea. No fishes can live in the sulphurous water of this lake: neither can plants grow on the shore. It is a fearful and lasting proof of God's punishment of sins of impurity.

My Bible History - Old Testament #12

- The Sacrifice of Isaac

Abraham and Sara were at last given a son whom they named Isaac. They loved him with all their hearts, because he had been sent as God had promised, to gladden them in their old age.



Abraham loved Isaac so much that God decided to prove whether he did not care more for his son than for his God. To prove Abraham's faith, God one night commanded him, "Take Isaac and go to a mountain that I shall show you. There offer Me your son as a sacrifice."

Abraham's heart was filled with grief. But he had always obeyed God, and he wanted to continue obeying him. Therefore he prepared to do what God asked.

Abraham cut wood for the sacrifice. With two servants and his son, he set out to find the place that God would show him for the sacrifice.

Abraham and his companions traveled for three days until they came to the foot of a mountain, Mount Moriah. Abraham said to his servants. "Remain here with the ass. Isaac and I shall go up the mountain to sacrifice. Wait for our return."

Abraham placed the wood upon the shoulders of Isaac. He himself carried the fire, and a knife. Then he and Isaac went

up the mountain. As they ascended, Isaac inquired, "Father, we have fire and wood. But where is the victim for the sacrifice?"

"God will furnish a victim for the sacrifice," Abraham replied.

Finally they came to the place for the sacrifice. Making an altar, they arranged the wood on it. Then Abraham bound Isaac and laid him upon the wood. With knife upraised, he was on the point of sacrificing Isaac when an angel called, "Abraham, do not kill your son. God knows now that you truly love Him, for you are ready to sacrifice Isaac at His command."

How happy Abraham was! Looking around, he saw a sheep caught by the horns in some bushes. He took the sheep and offered him to God as a sacrifice instead of Isaac his son.

Isaac willingly carrying the wood up Mount Moriah is a figure of Jesus Christ carrying His Cross, as the willing divine Victim about to be offered up in sacrifice upon it.

My Bible History - Old Testament #13 - Eliezer, the Faithful Servant

Abraham was becoming very old. He wished before his death to see Isaac happily married. Therefore he called his faithful servant Eliezer and said. "Go to the country from where I came, and from among my people bring back a wife for my son Isaac."



In preparation for the journey, Eliezer loaded ten camels with rich gifts. Then he departed for Haran. in Mesopotamia, the place where Abraham had lived before he came to Chanaan.

Upon arriving in Haran, Eliezer made his camels lie down near a well where each evening the women came to draw water. He begged God to let him know which of the women should be Isaac's bride.

Eliezer prayed, "When I say to the one whom You want Isaac to marry. 'Let down your pitcher, that I may drink'. please make her answer. 'Drink, and I will give your camels drink also'. In this way I shall be sure that I have chosen the right wife for Isaac."

Almost before Eliezer had finished praying, a young maiden arrived carrying a pitcher on her shoulder. She went down to the well and filled her pitcher. She was preparing to return home when Eliezer went near and said to her, "Please let me drink from your pitcher."

The girl replied. "Drink, my lord." at the same time quickly lowering the pitcher upon her arm. Then she hastened to fill it once more, saying, "I will draw water for your camels. that they may also drink."

Upon hearing her answer, Eliezer was filled with great joy. "Whose daughter are you?" he inquired. "Tell me, is there room in your father's house for me to stay tonight?"

The girl answered, "I am Rebecca, daughter of one of Nachor's sons. In our house there is room for you and straw for your camels."

Eliezer bowed down and praised God. Then taking earrings and bracelets, he gave them to Rebecca as gifts.

Rebecca ran home to tell her family about Eliezer, and about all that had taken place at the well.

My Bible History - Old Testament #14 - Isaac and Rebecca

When Laban, Rebecca's brother, heard what had happened to his sister at the well, he ran out to meet Eliezer. He said, "Come in, thou blessed of the Lord. Why do you stand outside? I have prepared the house, and a place for your camels."



Laban took Eliezer into his house and brought him some water to wash his feet. Then taking down the packs of the camels, he gave the animals food.

Laban's mother and Rebecca brought food for Eliezer. But Eliezer would not eat till he had spoken of his errand. "I am Abraham's servant," he said.

Then he told them how he had prayed God to show him which girl was to be Isaac's wife, and how God had answered his prayer. When the whole story had been told, Eliezer turned to Laban and inquired, "Tell me, what answer shall I take back to Abraham my master?"

Laban replied, "The answer is in God's hands. It shall be as He wills. Take Rebecca; let her be the wife of Isaac."

Eliezer took the gifts he had brought and gave them to Rebecca. to her mother, and to Laban. Early the next morning he prepared to return to Chanaan.

Laban and his mother blessed Rebecca. Then taking her nurse with her, Rebecca left with Eliezer for the Land of Chanaan.

In Chanaan Isaac had been waiting for the return of Eliezer. One evening, as he walked in the fields, thinking about the goodness of God, he saw in the distance some camels approaching. He knew then that Eliezer was returning home from Haran.

When Rebecca saw Isaac, she alighted from her camel. "Who is that man who is coming to meet us?" she asked of Eliezer.

Eliezer answered. "He is my master Isaac." And Eliezer told Isaac all that he had done in Haran.

As soon as Isaac saw Rebecca, he loved her. Soon they were married and lived happily with their father Abraham. Abraham gave Isaac his flocks, his lands, and all the other riches with which God had blessed him since he had gone to live in Chanaan.

My Bible History - Old Testament #15

- The Brother's Blessing

For many years after their marriage Isaac and Rebecca had no children. At last, however, God answered their prayers and gave them two sons, Esau and Jacob.



Esau, the favorite son of Isaac, was the older son. He grew up to be a hunter, and was hairy and strong. Jacob, the favorite of Rebecca, became a shepherd. He stayed home much of the time.

One day, as Jacob was cooking some vegetables, Esau came in tired from a day of hunting. He asked, "Give me some of that pottage, for I am very faint."

"Sell me your birthright," said Jacob, "and I will give you some."

As he was hungry, Esau exclaimed, "What good is my birthright if I die because of my faintness? Let it be done as you wish." In this way Esau sold his birthright to Jacob for a mess of pottage.

Now Isaac was grown very old, and his eyes were dim. One day, fearing that he would soon die, he called his favorite son Esau and said, "Go, and when you have taken some game, cook me a dish of it, and bring it, that I may eat. Then I shall bless you before I die."

Esau hurried out to do as Isaac bade. But Rebecca, having heard the words of her husband, called Jacob and told him all that she had heard. She said, "Bring me two young goats from the flock, that I may cook them for your father."

When the meat was cooked, Rebecca dressed Jacob in Esau's clothes, covered his neck and hands with the hairy skins, and sent him with the food to Isaac, to get his brother's blessing. At first Jacob did not wish to go, but finally consented to do as his mother wished.

"Are you Esau?" asked Isaac, touching Jacob's hands. "The voice is that of Jacob, but the hands are those of Esau." Believing it was really Esau, Isaac ate the meat, and then gave Jacob his blessing.

After some time Esau returned, bringing the meat that he had prepared. "Eat of the meat, my father," he said, "and give me your blessing."

Isaac trembled with surprise. "Your brother Jacob has taken away your blessing!" cried he.

The Hebrews, by rejecting Jesus Christ, have like Esau lost the blessing which was their birthright.

My Bible History - Old Testament #16

- Jacob's Dream

Esau was full of anger and despair. He cried, "Jacob made me sell him my birthright for a mess of pottage. And now he has taken away my blessing!" Esau was so angry that he swore vengeance against Jacob.



Rebecca saw the anger of Esau, and feared for Jacob.

She said, "Jacob, my son, your brother Esau is furious that you have taken away his blessing. I am afraid that he will want to kill you. Go to my brother Laban in Haran, and stay there until Esau's anger has passed. When that time comes, I will send for you, so that you may return."

Isaac, learning of Jacob's plan to go to Haran, called him and blessed him. He told him to find a bride among Laban's daughters.

Jacob set out on his journey towards Haran. One night he stopped to rest in an open field. He took a stone and placed it under his head for a pillow.

As Jacob slept he had a strange dream. He thought he saw a tall ladder reaching from earth to heaven. Up and down the ladder many angels went. At the top God stood. He said to Jacob, "I am the Lord God of Abraham and Isaac. I will give to you and to your children the land where you are now lying. Your children shall be as numberless as the dust of the earth."

Through you all the people on earth shall be blessed. I shall be with you wherever you go, to guide you, and to watch over" you. I shall bring you back to this land. I will never leave you until all that I have told you is done."

Jacob, upon awakening, said to himself, "Surely God was here, and I did not know it. This is the House of God and the gate of Heaven." And he called that place Bethel, which means House of God. Then he took the stone that he had used for a pillow, poured oil on it. and set it up as a sign.

This stone is a figure of our altars. They are consecrated With holy oil, and on them Christ Himself dwells, acting as intercessor between heaven and earth.

My Bible History - Old Testament #17 - Jacob and Rachel

On the way to Haran, Jacob came to a well near which flocks of sheep were lying. There was a large stone over the well. When all the flocks were there, the shepherds used to roll away the stone, let the sheep drink, and then put back the stone over the well.



Jacob went up to the shepherds of the flocks, and asked them if they knew Laban. Some of the shepherds replied. "Yes, we know him."

As they spoke, a young girl was seen coming, driving her sheep towards the well. The shepherds said to Jacob, "Here comes Rachel, Laban's daughter, with her father's flocks."

When Jacob saw Rachel, he rolled away the stone that covered the well's mouth, so that her sheep might drink. "I am Jacob, son of Rebecca, your father's sister," he said to her.

Rachel received Jacob gladly. She ran to tell her father the news.

Upon hearing of the arrival of Jacob, Laban hastened to make him welcome.

Jacob told Laban why he had come to Haran. He asked to be allowed to stay and work for him.

After a month, Laban asked. "What wages do you want for your labor?"

Jacob answered, "I will serve you seven years without wages, if you will let me marry your daughter Rachel."

Laban agreed, saying, "It is better that I should give her to you than to a stranger. Let it be as you wish."

From that time Jacob served Laban faithfully. He loved Rachel, and was glad to work for her.

At last Laban gave him Rachel for his wife. In this way Jacob found Rachel his wife in the land of his mother's people.

Even after his marriage, Jacob stayed with Laban and worked for him. God blessed Jacob and gave him many riches. In time he owned large flocks. He became so rich that at last Laban became envious, and even tried to cheat Jacob.

My Bible History - Old Testament #18

- The Return of Jacob

Jacob stayed in Haran twenty years. One night, as he was sleeping, God spoke to him, telling him to return to Chanaan.

So Jacob took all his family, all his flocks, camels, and cattle, and started on his way back to the Land of Chanaan.



As Jacob came near to Chanaan, he remembered why he had left it twenty years before. He remembered the anger of his brother Esau.

Being very much afraid, Jacob sent ahead some messengers with gifts to ask for him Esau's forgiveness.

When the messengers came back, they announced, "Esau is coming to meet you. He has four hundred men with him."

How afraid Jacob was! He believed that Esau was coming to destroy him and his companions. Falling upon his knees, he prayed God to help him.

That night, as Jacob prayed, a stranger appeared and wrestled with him until dawn. As it was beginning to be light, the stranger said to Jacob, "Let me go, for it is dawn."

But Jacob replied. "I will not let you go until you bless me."

What is your name?" asked the stranger.

"It is Jacob," was Jacob's answer.

"From now on," said the stranger, "you shall not be called Jacob, but Israel, which means Strength of God." He blessed Jacob, and disappeared.

At last Jacob knew that he had wrestled all night with an angel. He was glad, because he believed he had been given a sign that God would protect him against the anger of Esau.

In the morning Jacob saw Esau coming towards him with four hundred men. The moment Esau saw Jacob, he ran to meet him. Weeping. Esau embraced his brother Jacob. All his anger had disappeared.

Jacob was very happy that his brother had forgiven him. and gave Esau many gifts.

Finally Esau returned to his house. Jacob continued his journey till he arrived at Hebron. where his father Isaac lived.

My Bible History - Old Testament #19

- The Coat of Many Colors

Jacob had twelve sons, of whom his favorite was Joseph. To show his love for Joseph, Jacob gave him a coat of many colors. This made the other brothers very jealous of Joseph.



When Joseph was sixteen years old, he had two dreams. In one he saw himself and his brothers binding sheaves of corn in a field. As they worked, his sheaf stood upright while his brothers' sheaves stood around and bowed to it. In another dream he saw the sun, the moon, and eleven stars bow down before him and honor him.

Jacob wondered when he heard about Joseph's dreams. "What," he cried, "shall you rule over us? Shall I and your mother and brothers bow before you?"

One day Jacob sent Joseph to the fields where his brothers were tending the flocks. When they saw him coming in the distance, they said, "Here comes that dreamer. Let us kill him and throw his body into a pit." And so out of jealousy Joseph's brothers planned to kill him.

But Ruben, the oldest, wished to save Joseph's life. He said, "Let us not kill him. Let us throw him into a deep pit here in the wilderness, but let us not shed his blood."

As soon as Joseph arrived, the brothers took away from him his coat of many colors. They cast him into a deep pit. Then they sat down to eat, all except Ruben, who had gone away.

After a while, some merchants passed by on their way to Egypt. Juda, one of the brothers, said, "What good will it do us to kill our brother? Let us sell him to these merchants instead."

The others agreed. They drew Joseph out of the pit, and sold him for twenty pieces of silver.

The brothers dipped Joseph's coat in some goat's blood, and took it to Jacob. They asked their father, "Is this Joseph's coat?"

At sight of the bloody coat, Jacob cried aloud. "It is my son's coat. A beast has devoured him!"

Joseph sold by his brothers is a figure of Christ, who was sold by Judas, one of his Apostles, for thirty pieces of silver.

My Bible History - Old Testament #20 - Joseph in Prison

Upon their arrival in Egypt, the merchants who had bought Joseph sold him to Putiphar, a captain in the king's army. Putiphar came to trust Joseph, and made him chief servant in his house.



One day Putiphar's wife became very angry and told her husband a wicked lie about Joseph. Putiphar believed her, and sent Joseph to prison.

The chief keeper soon grew to trust Joseph. He gave him charge of all the other prisoners, among whom were the chief butler and the chief baker of the king.

One morning Joseph saw the two servants of the king very sad. When he asked them the reason, they answered. "We have each dreamed a dream, but there is no one to tell us the meaning."

"With God's help, I shall explain your dreams," replied Joseph.

The butler had dreamed of a vine on which were three branches. Little by little ripe grapes grew on the branches. He took the grapes and pressed them into the king's cup that he held in his hands. Then he gave the cup to the king.

Joseph explained: "The three branches are three days. Within three days the king will forgive you. He will take you

back into his service. Do not forget to help me out of prison when you are free." The butler gladly promised to help Joseph when he should again be with the king.

The baker had dreamed that he carried three baskets on his head. The topmost basket contained all kinds of pastry. The birds of the air came to eat out of it.

Joseph explained. "The three baskets are three days. Within three days you will be hanged. The birds of the air will eat your flesh."

On the third day everything happened as Joseph had predicted. The chief butler was taken back into the king's service, while the chief baker was hanged. But the chief butler forgot his promise to help Joseph out of prison.

Joseph in prison, with two offenders, one of whom is restored to favor and the other perishes, is a figure of Jesus on the Cross between two thieves, one of whom receives the promise of eternal life.

My Bible History - Old Testament #21 - The King's Dream

Two years later the king of Egypt had two very strange dreams. He dreamed that he was standing near a river when out of it came seven fat and beautiful cows. As they grazed in a meadow, out of the river came seven lean and ugly cows. These lean cows ate up the fat cows.



The king was frightened because of his dream, and woke up. But when he slept again, he dreamed that seven full and good ears of corn grew upon one stalk. Then seven thin and withered ears grew upon the same stalk. And the seven thin ears ate up the seven good ears.

The king was greatly troubled. He sent for all the wise men in Egypt to explain his dreams. but nobody could tell him their meaning.

At last the chief butler remembered Joseph and said, "When the chief baker and I were in prison, we had strange dreams. A young Israelite in prison explained them. And everything happened as he said."

The king sent for Joseph, who was hurriedly taken from prison. The king then said to Joseph, "I have heard that you can tell the meaning of dreams. Can you explain mine?"

Joseph replied, "God will help me explain the king's dreams."

And so the king told all that he had dreamed about the cows and the ears of corn. Joseph said, "The two dreams are one. God has showed the king what He is about to do. The seven fat cows are seven years of plenty. The seven good ears of corn are those same seven years of plenty. The seven lean cows are seven years of famine. The seven thin ears are those same seven years of famine.

"The dreams mean the same and are one. There will come seven years of great plenty throughout Egypt. After these seven years of plenty will come seven years of famine. Let the king choose a wise man to rule over Egypt. Let this ruler gather corn during the years of plenty, so that the people may have food during the seven years of famine."

My Bible History - Old Testament #22 - Joseph as Governor of Egypt

The king heard all that Joseph said, and was pleased. He said to his servants. "Can we find another man as full of the spirit of God?" And to Joseph he said. "Is there any man wiser than you are? God has showed you all these things. You shall be ruler of Egypt. and all shall acknowledge you. No one shall be above you except me, who am the king."



Removing his ring, the king put it on Joseph's finger as a sign of authority, that all might obey him. The king also gave him one of his chariots. Wherever Joseph went, a soldier walked before his chariot. crying aloud, "Bow the knee. because Joseph, who is made the governor of Egypt, is coming!"

Joseph preferred to go to prison rather than offend God. Even in this life God rewarded him with wealth and honor.

Soon the seven years of plenty arrived. All over Egypt there were rich harvests. The earth yielded its products abundantly. Every one had more than he needed.

Joseph commanded the people to store away as much grain as they could. He built great storehouses, where he gathered in the grain that was as plentiful as the sands of the sea. At

the end of the seven years of plenty, Joseph had filled very many storehouses to overflowing.

The years of plenty passed, and the seven years of famine that Joseph had foretold began. Such a famine had never been seen before. It was only in Egypt that there was food.

When the famine began, and the Egyptians had eaten up all their grain, the people cried out to the king to feed them, or they would all die of hunger. The king said to them, "Go to Joseph. Do whatever he commands."

Joseph ordered the great storehouses to be opened one by one. Grain was sold to the people. No one died of hunger in Egypt. because Joseph had wisely stored up grain during the plentiful years.

Soon other lands heard about the food in Egypt. From far and near people came to buy grain of Joseph.

My Bible History - Old Testament #23 - Joseph and His Brothers in Egypt

In Chanaan there was great suffering - because of the famine. One day Jacob sent his ten oldest sons to buy corn in Egypt. He kept only his youngest, Benjamin, whom he loved best, with him.



As soon as Joseph saw his brothers, he knew them; but they did not recognize him. He pretended to believe them spies, and cast one of them, Simeon, into prison. Then he gave them as much corn as they could carry, saying, "Bring Benjamin to see me, and I will set Simeon free."

When Jacob learned from his sons what Joseph wanted, he was sad for fear some harm would befall Benjamin. He refused to let the little boy go.

Soon the corn that the brothers had brought was gone. Jacob told his sons to buy some more. But they said, "We cannot, unless you let Benjamin go with us, or Joseph will not sell us corn."

Juda, one of the brothers, promised to bring back Benjamin. Finally Jacob agreed to let his youngest son go, and the brothers set out for Egypt.

When Joseph saw Benjamin, he wept for joy. He prepared a banquet for his brothers. He ordered that their sacks should be filled with corn.

At last the brothers started back for Chanaan. They had not gone far when a servant of Joseph's overtook them. "You have stolen my master's silver cup," said he.

To prove their innocence, the brothers asked to be searched. The cup was found in Benjamin's sack. Ashamed and bewildered, they returned to Joseph's house.

Now Joseph had ordered a servant to put the cup secretly in Benjamin's sack. When his brothers returned, he said, "Let Benjamin, in whose sack my cup was found, remain as my servant. The rest of you may return to your father's house."

Juda cried, "Take me as your servant! What shall I say to my father if Benjamin does not return? Jacob will die of grief."

Joseph could no longer restrain himself. Weeping before them, he said, "I am Joseph your brother!"

Joseph pardoning his brothers who had sold him into Egypt is a figure of Jesus Christ forgiving our sins if we repent and make a humble confession.

My Bible History - Old Testament #24 - Jacob in Egypt

Joseph prepared gifts for his brothers to take back to Jacob. He also sent wagons full of food. He told them to return to Chanaan to bring back Jacob and all their families and goods to Egypt.



When his sons told Jacob that Joseph was alive, he could not believe the news. But when he saw the gifts and wagons, he exclaimed, "Joseph really lives! I will go and see him before I die."

Soon they set out for Egypt. One night, as Jacob slept, God said to him, "Fear not. Go to Egypt. There I will make of you a great nation. And I will surely bring you back to Chanaan."

In order to let Joseph know of their arrival, Juda went ahead of the rest. Joseph, riding in his chariot, went to meet Jacob in Gessen. Upon seeing his father, he embraced him and wept with joy. In his happiness Jacob cried out, "Now I shall die with joy, for I have seen your face, and know that you are alive!"

With the king's consent, Joseph gave his father and his brothers rich land in Gessen, where they were to live and pasture their flocks. He gave the king's cattle in their charge. He presented Jacob to the king, whom Jacob blessed.

The Israelites lived in Gessen seventeen years. Jacob died there when he was one hundred forty-seven years old.

Before his death he charged Joseph to bury him with Abraham and Isaac back in Chanaan. Then he called his twelve sons, and gave each one a blessing.

To Juda he gave the greatest blessing, saying: "You shall rule over your enemies. The sons of your father shall bow down before you. The sceptre shall not be taken away from Juda till He come that is to be sent, and He shall be the Expectation of Nations."

This prophecy, which clearly foretold the time when the Messiah would come, was accomplished when Herod, the first foreigner, ruled over Judea. In Herod the sceptre passed from Juda.

And then Jesus Christ was born, as it had been foretold.

My Bible History - Old Testament #25 - The Trials of Job

During the time of Joseph, there lived in the land of Hus, in Arabia, a man called Job, an upright man, who loved God and avoided sin. He had seven sons and three daughters. He owned seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred oxen and five hundred asses, as well as many other riches.



One day God wished to prove the goodness of Job. God spoke to Satan, saying, "Have you seen My servant Job? There is none like him on earth. a perfect and upright man. fearing God and avoiding evil."

Satan replied that it was easy for Job to be good, because he was rich.

God answered Satan, "You can do what you will to Job's possessions, but do not hurt his body. You shall see how he will remain faithful to Me in spite of what you do to him."

Soon after, a messenger arrived before Job. to tell him that the Sabeans had taken his oxen and asses, and had slain all his servants. Almost at the same moment another messenger arrived to announce that all Job's sheep and shepherds had been struck by lightning. A third messenger

came to say that the Chaldeans had taken Job's camels and slain those who took care of them.

At last a fourth messenger arrived. He brought the worst news of all. He announced. As your sons and daughters were eating and drinking, there came a strong wind from the desert. It shook the whole house. The house fell and killed all your sons and daughters. I alone escaped to tell you."

When he heard all the misfortunes that had happened, Job was filled with great sorrow. But he did not sin by blaming God, nor by feeling discontented.

Instead, Job fell upon his face, and adored God. He exclaimed, "The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away: Blessed be the Name of the Lord!" God was very much pleased with Job. because of his faith and love.

Job is a figure of Jesus Christ Who endured sorrow and agony, but did not complain. From Job's story we also learn how far sometimes God permits the devil to exercise his power.

My Bible History - Old Testament #26 - The Reward of Patience

One day Satan appeared before God and said, "Job is faithful to You because I cannot hurt his body. If You let me touch his person, he will curse You, and will no longer be patient."



So God allowed Satan to hurt Job's body, telling him only to spare his life. Satan caused sores to break out all over the body of Job. from the soles of his feet to the top of his head.

Job did not complain. With a piece of broken pottery, he scraped his sores as he sat among the ashes. His wife angrily said. "Are you still patient?"

"You talk like a foolish woman." replied Job. "If we have received good things from the hands of God, why should we not receive evil?"

Three of Job's friends arrived to visit him. They were very sorry, and stayed seven days without saying a word, because they knew how much Job suffered.

After seven days. Job began speaking of his sorrows. They said that his trials must be a punishment for his sins. But he answered that he had done no wrong.

Job said, "Although He should kill me, I will trust in Him. He shall be my Saviour. For I know that my Redeemer lives, and

in the last day I shall rise out of the earth, and in my flesh I shall see my God. He knows my way, and has tried me as gold that passes through the fire. My foot has followed His steps; I have kept His way. I have not departed from the commandments of his lips."

Job loved God so much that he was granted the gift of prophecy. He spoke of God as if he had been talking with Him.

God was much pleased with the patience of Job. He took pity on him, and delivered him from his sufferings. He gave him twice the amount of riches that he had before. He had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, one thousand oxen, and one thousand asses. God also gave him seven sons and three daughters. Job lived happily till he was one hundred and forty years old.

Even in this life. and always in Heaven, God rewards those who are faithful to Him.

My Bible History - Old Testament #27 - The Rescue of Moses

After the death of Jacob, his descendants lived many years in Egypt. They became very rich because they worked hard and long. Their number increased rapidly till finally they spread all over the land. Everywhere they went, they were called "Children of Israel", or "Israelites", because Jacob's name was Israel.



After many years a new king ruled Egypt. He was afraid of the Israelites because of their number and industry. He said to the Egyptians, "Let us be harsh with the Israelites, so that they may not increase. For they may become our enemies, and rule over us."

In spite of the cruel treatment, however, the Israelites continued to increase in number. At last the king ordered that every baby boy born of the Israelites should be cast into the river to die.

At this time, a baby boy was born to an Israelite woman of the tribe of Levi. For three months she hid the child in her home. When it was no longer possible to hide him, she wove a basket of grasses. She covered the basket with mud and pitch, so that the water would not get in. Putting the baby in the basket, she laid it among the reeds near the river bank. To her daughter she said, "Miriam, stand near. See what happens to the baby."

After a while the king's daughter came to bathe in the river. She saw the basket among the reeds, and ordered one of her maids to fetch it.

When the basket was opened, the princess saw the baby, who was crying. She took pity on the child and decided to save him. This is one the Israelite children," she said.

Miriam saw all that had taken place. Running forward, she asked the princess, "Shall I get an Israelite woman to nurse the baby?"

The princess consented, and Miriam hurried to fetch her mother.

"Take the child," the princess said to the mother. "Nurse it for me. I will pay you wages." The mother gladly took the baby home. She nursed it until it was grown up. This child was Moses.

My Bible History - Old Testament #28 - The Flight of Moses

When Moses was grown up, his mother gave him back to the king's daughter. The princess took him to live with her in the palace, and loved him as her own son.

"I will call him Moses," she decided, "for I drew him out of the water."



The lad grew up to be strong and good. Although he lived like a prince in the palace, he was not happy, because he was troubled by the sufferings of his people, the Israelites.

Moses was sorry for his people, whom the Egyptians treated cruelly. All kinds of burdens were laid on them. The Israelites had to do much heavy work, such as digging, and carrying great stones for the structures that the Egyptians built.

Day and night the Israelites had to work. They did not rest, however tired they might be, until their Egyptian masters gave them permission. Moses suffered to see his people placed under such cruel masters.

One day Moses saw an Egyptian strike one of the Israelite laborers. How angry Moses was! In his anger he struck down the Egyptian and killed him.

The king learned what Moses had done, and decided to put him to death. Afraid of the king's anger, Moses fled to a

country called Madian.

One day Moses sat beside a well to rest. The seven daughters of a man called Jethro arrived to give their flocks drink. After a while some shepherds came, and began pushing the girls aside.

Moses was angry at the rude shepherds and drove them away. Then drawing water, he helped the girls give their sheep drink.

When the daughters of Jethro arrived home, they told their father all that had happened at the well.

"Where is this good man?" asked Jethro. "Call him, that I may show him my gratitude."

Jethro made Moses welcome in his house. Later on, Moses married one of Jethro's daughters, and took care of Jethro's flocks. He lived in Madian for forty years.

My Bible History - Old Testament #29 - The Burning Bush

One day Moses led his flock to graze near Mount Horeb. There he saw a wonderful sight. Fire appeared from a bush, and the bush burned brilliantly, but it was not consumed. From the burning bush God spoke to Moses.



"I have heard the prayers of the children of Israel. I have seen how they suffer at the hands of the Egyptians," God said. "I will deliver them from their masters, and take them to a land flowing with milk and honey. Go, therefore, to the king of Egypt, and ask him to let the Israelites go to the desert to offer sacrifice."

"But who am I," objected Moses, "that the king and the Israelites should believe me when I tell them that You have sent me?"

So God gave Moses signs by which he could convince the children of Israel. God bade him cast his rod upon the ground. The rod turned to a serpent. When God commanded him to take it up, it became a rod once more.

Then God said. "If they will not yet believe, take water out of the river, pour it out upon the dry land, and the water shall be turned into blood."

"By those signs," God said. "the Israelites will believe that I have sent you."

Still Moses was unwilling. He told God that he was slow of speech.

God became angry at Moses. and said, "Who made man's mouth? Or who made the dumb and the deaf, the seeing and the blind? Go, I will be with you to teach you what to say. Take your brother Aaron to speak for you."

Moses bade Jethro goodbye, and set out with his wife and children for Egypt. On the way they were met by Aaron, to whom Moses told all that God had commanded him at Mount Horeb.

Upon their arrival in Egypt, Moses and Aaron called the Israelites. Aaron gave them God's message. Moses showed them the wonderful signs. The Israelites believed, and were happy.

To thank God for having sent Moses to deliver them from slavery, the Israelites fell down on their knees and worshipped God.

My Bible History - Old Testament #30 - The Punishment of Egypt

Moses and Aaron went to ask the king of Egypt, in the name of the Lord, to let the Israelites go to sacrifice in the desert.

The king answered, "Who is the Lord, that I should hear His voice? I do not know Him. I will not let the Israelites go." Then he ordered his servants to give the Israelites more work, so that they might not have time to think of offering sacrifices.



"Let them make the same number of bricks they have been making," he said, "but let them find their own straw. Do not give them any straw for the bricks."

When the Israelites were given harder work, they blamed Moses and Aaron for their troubles. Moses said to God, "Why do You allow the people to suffer so much? Since I came, the king has treated them more harshly than before. Why have You sent me?"

God answered Moses, "You shall see what I shall do to the king. Go to the Israelites and tell them that I shall free them from their slavery." But the Israelites would no longer listen to Moses.

Moses and Aaron again went to the king. They asked him to let the Israelites go. To prove that they came at God's

command. Aaron cast his rod down before the king. Immediately it became a serpent.

The king called his magicians. The magicians cast their rods down. and their rods turned into serpents also. But Aaron's rod ate up all the other rods. Nevertheless the king refused to let the Israelites go.

And so God punished the land of Egypt. Every time that the king refused the request of Moses, God sent the Egyptians a new affliction. In all He sent ten plagues.

First, the water in the river turned to blood. Second, frogs in great numbers filled the land. Third, the dust was changed into small insects so numerous that they covered everything. Fourth, came a pest of flies. Fifth, an epidemic killed all the cattle. Sixth, boils broke out on man and beast. Seventh, hail and lightning fell. Eighth. locusts ate up what the hail had left. Ninth, darkness covered Egypt.

Still the king refused to let the Children of Israel go. So God sent the tenth plague.

My Bible History - Old Testament #31

- The First Pasch

In spite of all that God had sent to punish Egypt, the king was hard-hearted, and would not let the Israelites go.

Therefore God said to Moses. "I will send one more plague upon the Egyptians. Then the king will let you go."

"Let each family kill a young lamb and sprinkle the doorposts of the house with its blood. Let the lamb be roasted and eaten at night with unleavened bread and bitter herbs," Moses directed the children of Israel. "For the Angel of Death will pass through the land to destroy all the first-born of the Egyptians. When he sees the blood on your doorposts, he will pass on. He will not punish you or your children." This was the first Pasch.



The Israelites did as Moses bade them. At midnight the Angel of Death passed through Egypt, destroying all the first-born - from the first-born of the king to the first-born of the poorest Egyptian, and taking also the first-born of all animals. In every Egyptian house there was sorrow and weeping because of the death of all the first-born.

Among the Israelites no one died. The Angel of Death spared them when he saw the blood of the lamb on their doorposts.

In despair and fear, the king sent for Moses and Aaron during the night. "Go," said he. "Take your flocks and your

people. Leave Egypt. Go and serve your God, for if you do not, we shall all die."

The Egyptian people also urged the Israelites to go, saying. "If you do not hasten, we shall all be dead men." They even gave the Israelites jewels and precious ornaments, crying to them, "Take everything and go. that we may live."

The lamb that the Israelites killed for the first Pasch is a figure of our Lord Jesus Christ. As the blood of the Paschal lamb saved the Israelites from the Angel of Death, so the Blood of our Lord saves our souls from death through sin. The Israelites celebrated the Feast of the Pasch (Easter) in memory of their liberation from their slavery in Egypt. Today Christians celebrate the Feast of Easter (Pasch) in memory of the Resurrection of Our Lord, Who freed us from the slavery of sin.

My Bible History - Old Testament #32 - Miraculous Passage Through the Red Sea

Moses led the Children of Israel out of Egypt. They were about 600,000 men, besides women and children. They took along all their flocks and herds. They also took with them the bones of Joseph. And with all their goods they set out for the Promised Land.



God guided them during the journey. He went before them by day in a pillar of cloud, and by night in a pillar of fire. They could march, because of the light, by night as well as by day. The pillar of cloud and fire is a figure of Jesus Christ, Who is "the Way, the Truth, and the Life."

As soon as the Israelites had left, the king was sorry that he had let them go. He had lost the best workers in the land. And so he prepared an army to pursue the Israelites and bring them back.

The Children of Israel had stopped to rest on the shores of the Red Sea. When they saw the king's army, they were afraid. They blamed Moses, crying to him, "Why did you bring us out of Egypt to die in this desert?" But Moses answered, "God will protect us. Do not fear."

The pillar of cloud that had gone before the Israelites to show them the way went behind them, hiding them from the

Egyptians. Then, in obedience to God's command, Moses stretched his hands over the Red Sea. Immediately the waters were divided, and rolled back on both sides.

The Israelites passed over dry land across the Red Sea to the other side. The Egyptian army followed them. But as soon as the Israelites were safe on shore, Moses stretched forth his hand once more. The waters were united and flowed together as before. All the king's chariots, and horses, and soldiers were drowned in the sea. Nothing of the Egyptians was left on the shore.

The Children of Israel saw everything that happened to the Egyptians. They knew then that God was protecting them from their enemies. They knew that He had led them out of the land of bondage. With Moses and Aaron, the children of Israel rejoiced and sang hymns of praise to show their gratitude to God for all His goodness to them.

My Bible History - Old Testament #33 - Manna in the Wilderness

After crossing the Red Sea, the Israelites came to a desert. Through it they wandered three days. They became very thirsty, for there was no water anywhere.



At last the Israelites arrived at Mara. But here the water was so bitter that they could not drink. They blamed Moses angrily for their hardships. "What shall we drink?" they asked him.

Moses pray to God, Who showed him a tree. "If you cast the tree into the water, the people can drink, for the water will become sweet," God said.

Moses took the tree and threw it into the bitter water of Mara. Immediately the water turned sweet, and the Children of Israel could drink.

After some time the Israelites had no more food. They had eaten up all the food they had brought out of Egypt. Again they murmured against Moses, "Why did we leave Egypt? It would have been better if we had stayed, for there we could eat. Here we shall all die of hunger."

Then God spoke to Moses, "Tell the people that I will send them meat in the evening and bread in the morning. Then they may eat, and know that I am watching over them."

That evening many birds came. The people caught them and ate. In the morning the ground was covered with small white seeds. The Israelites called these seeds *manna*, and gathered them for food.

Moses said, "This is the bread which the Lord has given you to eat. Gather as much as you need for the day."

The Israelites obeyed. What was left on the ground melted when the sun arose.

On the sixth day Moses said, "Gather today enough to last you two days. Tomorrow, the seventh day, is holy, and you cannot gather manna." On that day manna did not fall. In this way God showed that His day must be kept holy.

God sent the Israelites manna for forty years in the wilderness, until they reached the borders of Chanaan.

Manna was a type of the Eucharistic Bread, the Body and Blood of Our Lord, which comes from heaven to feed our souls during the time of our mortal pilgrimage till we come at last to our eternal home, Heaven, the true land of promise.

My Bible History - Old Testament #34

- The Ten Commandments

In the third month after the Children of Israel had left Egypt, they arrived near Mount Sinai, and encamped at the foot of the mountain.

God called Moses and said to him. "Go and prepare the people. On the third day I will appear before them."



In the morning of the third day there was thunder and lightning. A thick cloud appeared on the mountain. A trumpet sounded loudly.

The Israelites trembled with fear. Moses brought them out of their camp to the foot of Mount Sinai, which shook violently and smoked like a furnace. The trumpet blew louder and louder. Then God began to speak from the cloud.

The fear of the Israelites increased. Drawing back from the mountain, they begged Moses, "Let not God speak to us, lest we die."

"Do not be afraid," said Moses. "God shows Himself to you in order that you may fear Him. Then you will not fall into sin."

Moses then went up Mount Sinai to speak with God.

On Mount Sinai God spoke and said:

"I am the Lord thy God, Who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

"Thou shalt not have strange gods before me.

"Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.

"Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day.

"Honor thy father and thy mother.

"Thou shalt not kill.

"Thou shalt not commit adultery.

"Thou shalt not steal.

"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

"Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife.

"Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's goods."

These are what we today call the Ten Commandments.

From that time every year the Israelites celebrated the Feast of Pentecost in memory of the descent of God on Mount Sinai. We Christians celebrate the Feast of Pentecost in honor of the descent of the Holy Ghost on the Apostles.

My Bible History - Old Testament #35 - The Golden Calf

God again called Moses to Mount Sinai. For forty days and forty nights Moses stayed there, listening to the words of God. Finally God gave him two stone slabs on which were written the Ten Commandments.



Meanwhile the Israelites had become tired waiting for Moses. They went to Aaron and said, "Make us gods to worship. Moses does not return. We do not know what has happened to him."

"Bring me all the gold ornaments of your wives and daughters," said Aaron. When the ornaments were brought, he melted them and then formed a golden calf. The people said: "Here is your god, O Israel."

The Israelites worshipped the golden calf and sacrificed before it. On the mount, God said to Moses, "Go down, for the people are sinning against Me. They have turned from the ways I taught, and are worshipping a golden calf. I will destroy them, because they are ungrateful." But Moses prayed God to spare the people.

Then, carrying the two tables of stone, Moses descended Mount Sinai. As he came near the camp, he saw the golden calf. The people were dancing before it.

In his anger Moses threw down the two slabs of stone, breaking them into thousands of pieces. He took the golden calf and flung it into the fire. The people were sorry for their sins and did penance.

Again Moses went up to Mount Sinai, to pray for the people. God told Moses to make two tables of stone like the ones he had broken. On them Moses wrote the Ten Commandments.

God told Moses to have a beautiful box made, lined and covered with gold. On the cover were to be placed the golden images of two angels. This was to be the Ark of the Covenant. Inside this box the two tables of Law were to be kept. A linen tent embroidered in beautiful colors was to be made to house the Ark of the Covenant. This tent was the Tabernacle.

The Israelites made all these things, as God had ordered. The Tabernacle became the center of God's worship until the Temple of Solomon was built.

My Bible History - Old Testament #36 - The Tabernacle and Sacrifices

Moses was with God in the mountain for forty days and nights. When he went down, his face was radiant from his talk with God, and sent forth rays like horns. The Israelites could not look upon him, so that Moses had to cover his face with a veil.



Moses at once built the Tabernacle, which was divided into two parts: the Holy of Holies, and the Sanctuary. The Holy of Holies housed the Ark of the Covenant, which contained the Tables of Law.

In the Sanctuary were the Show Bread, the seven-branched candlestick, and the Altar of Incense. The altar of holocausts, upon which the sacrifices were offered in sight of the people, and the brazen basin in which the priests purified themselves before any sacred ceremony, were in the portico surrounding the Tabernacle.

The Ark was a figure of the tabernacle in Catholic churches; the Holy of Holies, of the altar on which Mass is said; the Sanctuary, of the place occupied by our priests; and the portico, of the body of the church, where the people now worship.

The Show Bread, consisting of twelve loaves, was a figure of the Blessed Eucharist, daily offered to God in thanksgiving for all His graces. The seven-branched candlestick

symbolized the Holy Ghost and His seven gifts in the Church.

The sacrifices of the Old Law were either bloody, in which were offered animals; or unbloody, in which were offered cakes and unleavened bread and wine. The bloody sacrifices prefigured the bloody sacrifice of Christ upon the Cross; the unbloody were a type of the Sacrifice of the Mass. The sacrifices of the Old Law ceased with the Sacrifice of Christ on Calvary. Today we have only one true Sacrifice: Holy Mass.

The chief religious feasts were: the Pasch or Passover, in memory of the deliverance out of Egypt; Pentecost, in remembrance of the Law received from Mount Sinai; the Tabernacles to commemorate the wanderings in the desert; and the Expiation, in which the priest sacrificed for his own and his people's sins.

God also gave rules about the priesthood. The order of ministers was: the high-priest, the priests, and the Levites.

By God's command, the people were to support the priests and Levites serving at the altar. In the same way, we have that obligation to support the priests of our Church.

My Bible History - Old Testament #37 - The Twelve Spies

A year after the Israelites had camped at the foot of Mount Sinai, Moses led them towards Chanaan. To guide them, God sent a cloud to go before them.

One day God told Moses to send men to look over the land of Chanaan which He had promised the Israelites. Moses chose one man from each of the twelve tribes into which the Children of Israel were divided.



To the twelve men Moses said, "Go and see what sort of land it is. See what people are living there now. Find out whether the land is good or bad."

The twelve spies journeyed to the Promised Land. They stayed there forty days.

Upon their return to the Israelite camp, they carried with them an enormous cluster of grapes and other good fruits. They reported, "The land is very rich. But it has strong inhabitants and great walled cities. The people are as large as giants."

However, two of the spies, Caleb and Josue, advised, "Let us go to that land, for we can conquer it. The country is flowing with milk and honey. If the Lord is with us, we shall possess that land and live there happily."

The Israelites were frightened, and did not want to go. Murmuring against Moses, they said to each other, "Let us choose another leader to take us back to Egypt."

To Moses they cried, "Why have you brought us to this land to die? Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?"

God was very much displeased because the people had no faith. He would have destroyed them, but Moses prayed Him to have patience.

God forgave the people, but said, "I will punish them. None of those who are twenty years old and over, and murmured against Me, shall reach the Promised Land. Only Caleb and Josue shall enter it. For forty years the Children of Israel shall wander in the desert."

Moses who so often prayed God to pardon the Israelites was a figure of our Lord Jesus Christ Who intercedes for us before the Eternal Father.

My Bible History - Old Testament #38 - Miracles in the Desert

The Children of Israel wandered forty years in the desert. Several times they again forgot God and murmured against Moses and Aaron.

Once, when they could not find fruit or water, they were angry and said to Moses. "Why have you brought us into this desert to die? Here no fruit, or grain, or vine, will grow. We cannot even find water to drink."



Moses and Aaron went to the Tabernacle to pray for the people. God told Moses to strike a rock before the Israelites. God promised that the rock would give forth water for them to drink.

Moses called the people together in front of the rock. He struck the rock two times. From the rock water gushed forth, and the people could drink.

Now Moses struck the rock two times because he knew how wicked the Israelites had been. He wondered if God would really give them water, as He had promised, even when they had been very wicked.

God saw this lack of faith, and said to Moses, "Because you have not believed Me you shall not lead the people into the Promised Land."

The Children of Israel were very ungrateful to God in the desert, in spite of so many benefits they received from Him. They even murmured against God. They blamed Moses for all their troubles, saying, "Why did you bring us out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? Here we have no water. We are tired of eating manna, and there is no other bread."

To punish the wicked people, God sent serpents to bite them. Many of them died. The people went to Moses and begged him to pray God that the serpents be taken away. God said to Moses, "Make a serpent of brass. Everyone who looks on that shall live."

Moses fashioned a serpent of brass and set it up for a sign. Whenever someone was bitten by a serpent, he would look at the brass serpent and get cured.

This serpent of brass was a figure of Christ, Who was nailed on the Cross on Mount Calvary to save mankind.

My Bible History - Old Testament #39 - The Arrival at the Promised Land

After the Israelites had wandered forty years in the desert, Moses one day called them together. As God had commanded him, he told them that Josue should succeed him as their leader.



Then Moses went up Mount Nebo, from where God showed him the Promised Land. "That is the land I will give to the children of Israel," God said, "but you shall not enter it, because you doubted Me."

Moses died at the age of one hundred and twenty years. He was a wise ruler, an illustrious Prophet, and a great Saint. He wrote the first five books of the Bible, called the Pentateuch.

After the death of Moses, God said to Josue, "Arise and lead the people into the Promised Land. As I was with Moses, so I shall be with you. I will never forsake you. Take courage and be strong."

So Josue took command of the Israelites. He sent two spies before him across the river Jordan into the city of Jericho. The two spies stayed in the house of a woman named Rahab. The house was built near the walls of the city. When the king of Jericho heard that there were two Israelites in Rahab's house, he ordered her to give them up to him. But she hid them on the roof, and told the king that they had left. When

night came, she helped them escape by letting them down with a rope out of a window.

The two spies returned to Josue, and said, "The Lord has truly given us Jericho. All the people there are afraid of us."

Josue prepared the Children of Israel to cross the Jordan to Jericho. The priests went first, carrying the Ark of the Covenant. As soon as they stepped into the Jordan, the waters went back on both sides, so that there was a dry passage to the other bank. The Israelites crossed safely through this dry passage to the opposite bank of the river. In this way, after many years of wandering, the Israelites came at last to the Promised Land. There the manna ceased to fall, because the land was flowing with milk and honey.

The Promised Land is a figure of Heaven. Once in Heaven, we shall see God face to face and no longer under the appearances of bread and wine.

My Bible History - Old Testament #40 - The Taking of Jericho

"When the people of Jericho heard how the Israelites had crossed the Jordan, they were very much afraid. They closed all the gates in the walls of the city.

Josue ordered the people to march with the priests carrying the Ark before them, around the walls once a day for six days. As they marched, they made no noise, except for seven priests who continually blew trumpets. On the seventh day the Israelites went around the walls seven times.



Then Josue commanded, "Shout, for the Lord has delivered the city to you." The priests blew loudly on their trumpets, and the people gave a great shout. And all at once the walls of Jericho fell down.

The Israelites entered and took the city. They killed all the inhabitants, except the family of Rahab, who had protected the two spies. After killing the people of Jericho, the Israelites set the city on fire, destroying it completely.

Josue fought many other battles. Once, because it was getting dark, he commanded the sun to stop; it obeyed him, so that the Israelite army won a great victory.

In this way the Children of Israel returned to the Promised Land. Before he went to Egypt with his sons, Jacob had lived

in Chanaan. His twelve sons were the ancestors of the Israelites. This is why the Children of Israel were divided into twelve tribes, each tribe being named after one, of Jacob's sons. The principal tribe was that of Juda, from which the Saviour was, according to the prophecies, to come.

Josue divided Chanaan among the tribes of Israel. Only the tribe of Levi, which was that of the priests, was not given any land, because the priests were allowed to live among the other tribes and were to be supported by them.

Josue tried to lead the Israelites to love God. He told them that God wanted them to conquer the Land of Chanaan because there its people worshipped false gods.

However, after Josue's death, the Israelites disobeyed God. They made friends with the Chanaanites, and even married them. Very soon many of the Children of Israel forgot God completely, and began to worship idols.

My Bible History - Old Testament #41

- The Victory of Gedeon

For many years God allowed the Israelites to be troubled by their enemies. God however did not abandon the Children of Israel. He sent them brave men to lead them in battle, and to rule over them.



These men ruled the Israelites for four hundred years. They were called Judges. There were in all sixteen Judges who ruled Israel. One of the bravest was Gedeon.

Before Gedeon became Judge, the Israelites were being troubled by people living in Madian near Chanaan. One day, as Gedeon was threshing wheat, an Angel appeared before him and said, "The Lord is with you, O brave Gedeon. Go and save the Children of Israel from the Madianites."

That night Gedeon took ten of his servants to Madian and destroyed the altar of Baal, a false god. The Madianites gathered an army and marched against Israel.

Gedeon selected three hundred men from the Israelite army, and divided them into three companies.

To each man he gave a trumpet and a pitcher containing a lamp. He said, "Do what you see me do. When I blow my trumpet, blow yours also."

Gedeon led his men at midnight against the Madianite camp. He blew his trumpet, and all his men did so, too. They banged their pitchers and held up the lamps, shouting, "The sword of the Lord and Gedeon!"

The Madianites were surprised and confused by the noise. They began fighting among themselves and killing one another. The Israelites easily drove them out of the country.

Gedeon led his people against many of their other enemies, and won victories for them. The Israelites said to Gedeon, "Rule over us. Be our king, and let your sons be kings after you."

But Gedeon answered, "I will not rule over you. Neither will my sons rule over you. God shall rule over you."

Gedeon is a model of a good ruler. He feared God and kept the commandments of God. God blessed him in all his ways.

My Bible History - Old Testament #42

- The Strength of Samson

Among the Judges Samson was the one most renowned for his wonderful strength. He was raised up by God to save the Israelites from the Philistines.

Once, when still a young man, Samson met a raging lion. He tore the lion to pieces without using any weapon.



In a battle with the Philistines, he killed a thousand men with the jaw-bone of an ass. Another time the Philistines heard that Samson had gone to Gaza. They locked the city gates, so that they might capture him in the morning. At midnight Samson rose, lifted the gates on his shoulders, and carried them with the posts and bolts to the top of a neighboring hill.

Samson married a Philistine woman called Dalila. The Philistines offered to give her money if she would find out wherein his strength lay and how they could overcome him. She agreed to betray Samson.

Dalila begged Samson to reveal the secret to her, but he refused. However, she gave him no rest, and at last he said, "A razor has never passed over my head, for I am consecrated to God. If my head should be shaved, my strength would leave me, I should become weak like other men."

When Samson was asleep, Dalila had his seven locks cut off. His strength left him. The Philistines seized him, put out his eyes, and cast him into prison. But Samson's hair began to grow again.

One day, the Philistines were feasting in their temple. They had Samson brought before them, so that they might make fun of him. About three thousand persons were present.

Samson said to the little boy that led him, "Let me touch the pillars which support the whole house, and let me lean against them, to rest myself a little."

Then he prayed, "O Lord God, restore to me my former strength!" And grasping the two pillars, he shook them violently. The whole building fell, killing Samson and the three thousand Philistines present.

Dalila was the cause of Samson's ruin. She was a bad companion for him. We must keep away from bad companions so that we may not be ruined forever.

My Bible History - Old Testament #43 - The Faithfulness of Ruth

Once, when the Judges were ruling Israel, there was a famine. A certain man from the tribe of juda therefore took his wife and two sons, and went to live in the land of Moab. This man died there.

After several years the two sons married women of Moab, named Orpha and Ruth. When about ten more years had passed, the two sons also died. Their mother, Noemi, was left alone with her sons' wives.



Noemi decided to return to her people in Israel. She said to her daughters-in-law, "Go back to the house of your fathers. May God give you peace and happiness."

Orpha and Ruth wept, and wanted to follow Noemi, but she said, "Go back, my daughters." She then kissed them good-bye.

So Orpha left Noemi. But Ruth clung to her and would not leave her. She said, "Do not ask me to leave you, to be separated from you. For wherever you go. there will I go. Wherever you live, there I too will live. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God. Wherever you die, there I shall die and be buried. Nothing will part me from you."

Noemi was happy to see Ruth so faithful. She let her go along with her to the old home in Bethlehem of Judea.

Noemi and Ruth arrived in Bethlehem at the beginning of the harvest. Ruth asked permission of Noemi to pick up grain after reapers. She went to the field of Booz, a rich relative of Noemi's husband.

When Booz saw Ruth, he said to his workers, "Let her gather as much as she can. Leave some of your grain on the field, so that she may gather more, and do not disturb her."

Ruth worked in the field of Booz every day until evening, to the end of the harvest. She did not go to another field, because Booz was kind to her. She gathered after the reapers all day, beat out the grain, then went home and gave it to Noemi.

Later on, Ruth married Booz, and had a son. This son was named Obed. He became the father of Jesse, who was the father of David, the King.

My Bible History - Old Testament #44 - Samuel as Judge

Among the children of Israel there lived a couple named Elcana and Anna. Anna was getting old, but still had no child. So she prayed to God for one. She promised that if God gave her a son, she would give him to the Lord all his days.



God answered Anna's prayers and sent her Samuel. He became one of the wisest Judges of Israel.

When Samuel was yet a little boy, Anna his mother took him to serve in the Temple. The priest at that time was Heli.

Anna said, "God sent me this son in answer to my prayers. I have brought him to serve in the Temple. As long as he lives, he belongs to God."

One night, when Samuel had been serving in the Temple some years, he heard someone calling. He ran to Heli, the high priest, and said, "Here I am."

But Heli replied, "I did not call you. Go back to sleep."

Samuel went back to bed. After a while he again heard his name being called. He jumped up and went to Heli, crying, "Here I am, for you called me."

This happened three times. At last Heli knew that it was God who had spoken to Samuel. He told the boy, if he was called again, to answer, "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth."

Samuel went back to sleep. After a while he once more heard a voice calling him. He answered, "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth." Then God spoke and told Samuel that He was going to punish Heli and his sons. Heli's sons were wicked, but Heli did not punish them, although he knew about their wickedness.

Some time after this, the Philistines fought against the Israelites. Heli's sons were killed in battle. The Ark of the Covenant was captured. When Heli heard the news, he fell from his seat, broke his neck, and died.

When Samuel was grown up, he became a Judge of Israel and ruled wisely. He appointed his sons Judges, too. But they were wicked, and the Israelites asked Samuel to find a king to rule over them.

My Bible History - Old Testament #45 - Saul, First King of Israel

The Israelites continued to ask Samuel to find them a king. Samuel prayed God in behalf of the people.

Telling Samuel that a man named Saul would arrive, God said, "You must anoint Saul king." That act would be a sign that God had chosen Saul king.



Soon after, Saul came. Samuel poured oil on his head, as God had commanded, for a sign that Saul would become king. Samuel said, "God has anointed you king of the Israelites. You shall rule over them and protect them from their enemies."

The Israelites were joyful when they saw Saul. He was strong and handsome, and taller than any other man in Israel.

In the beginning of Saul's rule, everything went well. God was always with the Israelites, and defended them against their enemies.

But when he won many victories, Saul became proud of himself and sinned against God. At last God ordered Samuel to tell Saul that he would no longer be king of Israel. God directed Samuel to anoint a young shepherd boy named David.

The proud man is always punished by God. Pride was the sin of Satan. We must be humble, remembering that we could be nothing without God.

Saul was full of sorrow when he learned that God no longer wanted him to be king of Israel. He spent long hours in unhappy and gloomy thought.

One day Saul's servants said, "Let us bring you a man who will play on the harp and cheer you up. Then your gloomy thoughts will be driven away." And they sent for David.

Saul did not know that Samuel had anointed David. He made David his armor-bearer and grew to love him as his own son. In the palace David led a happy life. He would play on his harp every time he saw the king sad. Then Saul would breathe more easily, and forget his troubles.

David and Jonathan, Saul's son, became the best of friends. All the people grew to love David so much that at last Saul felt jealous. He was angry that the people should praise David for his bravery, and finally sought to kill him.

My Bible History - Old Testament #46

- David and Goliath

The strongest enemies of the Israelites were the Philistines. Once the Philistines built their camp on one mountain. The Israelites pitched theirs on the opposite mountain. Both armies prepared for battle.



Out of the Philistine army came a giant named Goliath. Every day he went forth and called out loud to the Israelites, "Choose one man from among you. Let him come down to fight me. If he kills me, we will be your servants. If I kill him, then you shall become our servants."

Saul and the Israelites were very much afraid. Goliath was so huge and strong that all were sure he would kill whoever dared to fight against him.

Many days passed. Still no Israelite dared to fight Goliath. One day David arrived at the Israelite camp. He heard the giant's challenge, and became angry. He asked, "Who is this man who defies the army of God? I will go and fight him."

Saul replied, "You cannot fight Goliath. He has fought and won many battles, but you are only a boy."

"I have killed both a lion and a bear that took a lamb out of my father's flock. The Lord Who protected me from those fierce animals will protect me against this proud Philistine giant," answered David.

Taking his staff, David went down to the brook and chose five smooth stones. These he put in his bag. With his sling in his hand he then went to meet Goliath.

The giant was angry when he saw how small and young David was. He roared, "Am I a dog, that you come to me with a staff?"

David replied, "You come to me with a sword, a spear, and a shield. I come in the name of God, Who will deliver you into my hands." Taking one of the stones from his bag, David put it in his sling and threw it. It struck the giant on the forehead. Goliath fell. David took the giant's sword and cut off his head.

He who places his confidence in God may overcome the greatest difficulties and conquer the enemies of his soul.

My Bible History - Old Testament #47 - King David

When David was thirty years old, he became King of Israel. He was a good king to his people, and protected them from their enemies. During his rule Israel became great and powerful.



Leading his soldiers against the city of Jerusalem, David conquered it and made it his capital. He built a wall around it and called it the City of David.

During the time that he ruled, David tried to lead the people to worship God as they should. He brought to Jerusalem the Ark that had been captured by the Philistines. He built a Tabernacle on Mount Sion to house the Ark.

The Ark was carried to this new Tabernacle in a great procession. As guard of honor, there were thirty thousand armed men. Numberless people followed the Ark. Those near played upon harps and flutes, and blew trumpets. David himself was in the procession playing on his harp, and dancing with joy before the Ark. After every few steps, the procession stopped to offer sacrifice. Everybody was glad to see the Ark brought to the City of David.

With the Ark of the Covenant placed safely in the new Tabernacle, David divided the priests into twenty-four groups. Each group was to serve in turn before the Lord.

David chose four thousand musicians to sing praises, and to play music to God each day.

If the Ark of the Covenant was the object of so much reverence, with how much more respect and veneration should we look upon our churches, where God Himself is present in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar!

Not only was David a great king. He was a great poet as well. He was inspired by God to write the poems that today we call the Psalms. Some of the Psalms of David are songs of thanksgiving and praise. Others tell of sorrow and repentance for sin.

Because David loved and served God, he was in turn loved by God, Who promised that the Saviour should be born of his family. David wanted to build a Temple, but God by a prophet sent him a message, saying, "Not you, but your son shall build Me a temple. I will establish his kingdom forever."

My Bible History - Old Testament #48 - The Ingratitude of Absalom

David fell into temptation and sinned against God. He took Bethsabee the wife of Urias, and afterwards plotted the death of her husband.



Greatly offended, God sent the prophet Nathan to rebuke David. The king humbly acknowledged his fault, saying have sinned against the Lord." Because of this humble confession, God pardoned David. But as punishment for his sins, David was sent many trials.

David's greatest trial was the revolt of his son Absalom. Absalom plotted against his father, beginning by flattering the people. When he thought he had enough supporters, he openly declared war. So many flocked to aid Absalom that David and his followers had to leave Jerusalem.

Weeping and walking barefoot, David went over the brook Cedron, up Mount Olivet, and across the Jordan. A man named Semei met him, and threw stones at him and cursed him, calling him a man of blood.

One of David's servants wanted to kill Semei, but David said, "Let him alone and do not trouble him. Perhaps the Lord will see my sorrow, and turn his curses into blessings."

Absalom pursued his father beyond the Jordan. Their armies met, and a battle was fought in the forest.

Absalom's army was defeated, and he fled on his mule. As the animal ran under an oak tree, Absalom's long hair was caught in the branches. While he hung there, the mule ran away. One of David's generals went and thrust three spears into Absalom's heart, and so the ungrateful son died.

The horrible fate of Absalom is a lesson to all children, teaching them to obey and honor their parents, as God commands.

When David heard of Absalom's death, he was filled with sorrow. He cried out, "My son Absalom, Absalom my son! Would to God that I might die for thee, Absalom my son, my son Absalom!"

In his sorrow for his son, David was a figure of Christ weeping, praying, and dying for His rebellious people, even for them that crucified Him.

My Bible History - Old Testament #49 - The Wisdom of Solomon

After forty years as king of Israel, David died. His son Solomon succeeded him.

In the beginning Solomon followed the example of his father, and was a good ruler. One night God appeared to him and said, "Ask whatever you wish me to give you."



"You made me King," replied Solomon. "I am only like a little child in wisdom, for I do not know much. But I must rule this great people, the children of Israel. If You will, therefore, give me an understanding heart, so that I may know the difference between good and evil. With such a gift I shall be able to judge well."

God was pleased with the words of Solomon. He said, "Because you have asked for understanding, and have not asked for long life or riches, I shall give you all these together."

Solomon's wisdom was soon put to a test. Two women came to ask him to decide a quarrel. One of them said, "This woman and I live in one house. This woman's child died. But she took my child while I slept, and put her dead child near me instead. I saw, when I awoke, that it was not my child."

"No," said the other woman, "the living child is mine, not hers."

The two began quarreling once more. There did not seem to be any way of deciding who was the mother of the living child.

King Solomon ordered, "Bring a sword. Divide the living child into two. Then give one-half to each woman."

At this, one woman cried, "O my Lord, give her the child alive, but do not kill it!"

The second woman, however, said, "Let not the child be mine or hers, but divide it."

Solomon, pointing to the first woman, said, "Give her the living child. She is its mother." For Solomon in his wisdom knew that she, being the true mother, could not bear to see her child killed.

My Bible History - Old Testament #50 - The Temple of Solomon

Before King David died, he called his son Solomon, and told him to build a temple for the Lord. He said, "I have gathered gold and silver, brass and iron, wood and stone, for the temple. But God will not let me build it, because I have taken part in many bloody wars."



In the fourth year of his rule. Solomon began to build God's temple on Mount Moriah in Jerusalem. He sent ten thousand Israelites to Libanus to cut cedars and pine trees for wood. Seventy thousand men carried the wood to Jerusalem. Eighty thousand men cut stone in the mountains. Three thousand six hundred men were overseers of the workmen. All the material needed for the temple was made ready before it was taken to Mount Moriah. This is why when the building was started, there was no sound of hammer, axe, or any other iron tool, heard there.

There were two parts to the building, which was of vast and magnificent proportions. The smaller but more important part was the "Holy of Holies". It was completely covered with gold. Two figures of angels, with outspread wings, were cut out of olive wood, covered with gold, and placed in the "Holy of Holies" to stand guard over the Ark which was to be kept there.

After seven years the temple was finished. It was furnished in rich style, all the vessels for its use being of precious materials. Then the priests brought the Ark, containing the Ten Commandments and the Book of the Law, and placed it in the Holy of Holies. When the Ark was placed in the Temple, a cloud filled the place. The people knew then that God was present.

After many years, Solomon was led away from God by pagan and impure women that he brought to his court. Giving in to his evil desires, Solomon sank deeper into wickedness. He even worshipped the false gods of the pagan women, and built a temple for their idols. We see in this example how even the wisest of men may fall into atrocious crimes when he sins against purity.

God was offended by Solomon's ingratitude and punished him. When his son Roboam became king, ten tribes revolted and formed the tribes of Israel. The people were divided into two great divisions - Juda and Israel.

My Bible History - Old Testament #51

- Elias the Prophet

From the time the Israelites left Egypt, God protected them and even showed them signs of His goodness and power.

Nevertheless they continually broke His commandments. They married pagans, people adoring false gods. Many times they themselves worshipped these false gods. Out of pity for them, God sent holy men to lead them back to Him. These men were the Prophets.



The Prophets not only taught the people how to serve God; they also foretold the coming of the Saviour, Who was to come to earth to save mankind from sin. The greatest of the Prophets were Elias, Isaías, and Jeremias.

The prophet Elias lived when King Achab was ruling Israel. This king had married a pagan wife, Jezabel, and had built a temple to her god, Baal. In that temple Achab also adored Baal.

Elias, being sent by God, said to Achab, "To punish you for worshipping idols, God will not send any rain for three years. There will be a famine."

Everything happened as Elias had foretold. When there was no more rain, God told Bias to go to a brook near the river Jordan. He went, and there morning and evening ravens

brought him food. He drank from the brook and was not thirsty.

After a while the brook dried up. God then said to Bias, "Go to the town of Sarephta. There a widow will feed you." Elias obeyed, and went to Sarephta.

When he came to the gate of the city, Elias saw the widow gathering sticks. He called, "Please give me some water to drink," and added, "Bring also a piece of bread."

The widow told him that she had no bread. She only had a handful of meal and a little oil. "Make me a cake out of the meal and oil, for God will not let it be used up." said Elias. The widow did so. The oil and meal lasted till the famine was over. Every day there was enough for Elias, the widow and her son.

Sometime later the widow's son fell ill and died. Elias prayed to God, "O Lord, let the soul of this child return into his body." And the widow's son lived again.

My Bible History - Old Testament #52

- The Miracle of the Fire

In the third year of the famine, Elias said to King Achab, "Call all the people of Israel. Call also the four hundred fifty priests of Baal. Then you shall all see that God sent the famine because you have followed Baal and have disobeyed God's commands."



When the people were all gathered together, Elias said, "If Baal is God, follow him. But if the Lord is God, why do you disobey Him? I am the only prophet of God. There are four hundred fifty prophets of Baal. Let them choose an ox, cut it to pieces, and lay it on an altar. I will also take an ox, cut it, and lay it on another altar. Let no fire be set to the wood under each ox. Then let the prophets of Baal call on him, while I call on the Lord. He who answers with fire on the wood is the True God."

The prophets of Baal prepared their ox. They placed it on the wood of their altar. They began calling, "Baal, hear us, and send us fire!" They called to Baal from morning till noon. They even cut themselves with their knives, so that blood covered their bodies. All the time they kept calling on Baal. But nothing happened. No one answered their cries. No fire appeared on their wood.

Then Elias said to the people, "Come near." He built an altar of stones, placed the wood, cut his ox in pieces, and laid it on the wood. He poured water over the ox and wood.

Then he prayed to God, "Lord, show this day that You are the True God, that I am Your servant, and that I have done everything at Your command."

At once the wood burst into flame. There was a big fire, which burnt not only the ox and the wood, but also the stones on the altar.

When the people saw this miracle, they cried, "The Lord is God! The Lord is God!" After a while the sky turned black, and there was a heavy rain. This was the first rain in three years.

Through the prophet Elias God performed many other miracles.

My Bible History - Old Testament #53 - Jonas and the Fish

God ordered the Prophet Jonas to go to Ninive and preach penance, for the people were committing many great sins. Unwilling to go, Jonas fled to the sea, and embarked on a boat going to Tharsis.

God sent a violent storm, and the ship was in danger of being wrecked. The sailors in great fear threw overboard all the goods they carried, to lighten the ship. Believing that someone on board was the cause of their misfortune, they drew lots. The lot fell upon Jonas, who said, "Cast me into the sea, and the tempest shall be calmed." The sailors took Jonas and cast him into the sea. At once the tempest ceased.

God prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonas. The prophet remained inside the fish for three days and three nights. He continually prayed to God. At last at the Lord's command the fish vomited Jonas upon dry land. Then God again ordered Jonas to go to Ninive.

This time Jonas obeyed. At Ninive he said, "Yet forty days, and Ninive shall be destroyed."

The people, upon hearing this, repented and fasted. Even the king did penance, and issued a proclamation that everyone should repent, so that God might forgive Ninive



and spare it. God saw their sincerity, and in His mercy spared the city.

Jonas feared that he might be looked upon as a false prophet. Building a hut outside the city he waited there to see what would befall Nineveh.

God caused an ivy to grow and shelter Jonas from the hot sun. For this Jonas was grateful. Now the next morning, God caused the ivy to wither. The sun beat down with such heat on Jonas that he cried, "It is better for me to die than to live."

God then said to him, "You are sorry for the ivy, although you were not the one to make it grow. Shall I not therefore spare Nineveh, which has more than one hundred twenty thousand people?"

Jonas, cast into the sea to save the crew, was a figure of Jesus Christ, who was sacrificed to redeem mankind. Jonas was three days inside the fish; Christ was three days in the tomb.

My Bible History - Old Testament #54

- Tobias and His Son

The sins of its people became so great that at last the Kingdom of Israel was destroyed. Its inhabitants were carried off to Assyria.

Among the captives was Tobias, a God-fearing man. He spent much of his time consoling the captives, feeding the hungry, and clothing the naked.



When the Assyrian king, Sennacherib, killed many Israelites and commanded their bodies to remain unburied, Tobias hid them in his house and buried them, at great risk to his own safety. One day, tired from this work, he fell asleep and accidentally lost his eyesight. He bore the misfortune with resignation.

When Tobias was already old, fearing that he would soon die, he called his son and said, "Honor your mother always. Fear God and never sin. Give alms to the poor. Keep yourself from all impurity. Never let pride rule you, for all perdition began from pride. Do not do to another what you would hate him to do to you. Seek the counsel of the wise man. Pray God at all times, and ask Him to direct your ways. We are poor, but we shall possess much if we fear God and abhor sin."

Tobias one day told his son to go to Ragab to collect a loan. On his way, young Tobias was met by a young man. This was

the angel Raphael. but young Tobias did not know it. The angel offered to guide young Tobias to Rages.

On the journey, young Tobias stopped by a river to rest and bathe. A large fish came out of the water and wanted to devour him. But the angel told him to catch the fish, cut up its flesh for food, and preserve the liver, gall, and heart for medicine.

On their return home, they applied that medicine to old Tobias' eyes, and in this way restored his eyesight.

The angel made himself known, saying, "I am the angel Raphael, one of the seven who stand before the Lord." He told them how God had sent him to heal the elder Tobias as a reward for his prayers and corporal works of mercy.

My Bible History - Old Testament #55 - Judith in the Assyrian Camp

Manasses, King of Juda, was held captive in Babylon. The Assyrian king sent his general, Holofernes, to conquer Chanaan.

Holofernes laid siege to the city of Bethulia. The people decided to surrender if no aid came within five days.



At that time there lived in Bethulia a young widow named Judith. She led a secluded life, praying and fasting. When she heard that the city was going to surrender, she said to the ancients, "Let us be patient and humble, and ask the Lord to show us mercy according to His will."

The ancients begged her, "Pray for us, for you are a holy woman."

Judith went to her oratory, put ashes on her head as a sign of penance, and prayed God for help. Then putting on her beautiful clothes, she went with her maid to the Assyrian camp. When Holofernes saw her, he was pleased with her, and commanded that she might go in and out as she wished.

Four days after her arrival, he gave a great banquet during which he became drunk, and fell fast asleep. Judith waited till everybody had left. She stood weeping and praying, "Strengthen me, O Lord, that I may act according to Thy will." Then taking down Holofernes' sword, she cut off his

head. She went out and gave it to her maid to carry in a satchel. They left the camp and went back to Bethulia.

All ran in great joy to meet Judith, for no one had expected her to return. She said, showing them Holofernes' head, "Praise God, Who has not forsaken them that hope in Him. Glorify Him, for His mercy endures forever."

In the morning the people hung up Holofernes' head upon the city walls. All took up arms and went against the Assyrian camp. When the Assyrians found the headless body of their general, they were filled with terror and fled. In this way Judith saved her people.

Judith is one of the best figures of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The Church exalts the Blessed Virgin using the praises the Israelites sang at the triumphant return of Judith: "You are the glory of Jerusalem, you are the joy of Israel, you are the honor and glory of your people."

My Bible History - Old Testament #56

- The Babylonian Captivity

The Prophets tried to turn the people of Juda from their evil ways by telling them that if they disobeyed God, they would be defeated by their enemies. But the Jews paid no attention to the words of their holy men.



One of their enemies was Nabuchodonosor, king of Babylon. This king sent an army to conquer Jerusalem. The soldiers burnt the Temple, and broke down the city walls. They took many of the Jews to Babylon as captives. They also took away the precious vessels and ornaments of the Temple of God.

Among the Jews who were taken captive were Daniel and his three friends. Because of their wisdom, these four men came to be honored by Nabuchodonosor.

One night the king had a dream which the wise men of Babylon could not interpret. In anger the king ordered all the wise men put to death. When soldiers came to kill Daniel and his three friends, Daniel asked the king to give him time to explain the dream.

Daniel prayed God for help, and God revealed to him the meaning, so that Daniel could interpret Nabuchodonosor's dream. The King was very much surprised. He said, "Truly,

your God is the true God." He made Daniel governor of Babylon.

Some time after, Nabuchodonosor made a golden statue, which he ordered everyone in Babylon to worship. When Daniel and his friends refused, the king was so angry that he ordered Daniel's three friends cast into a very hot furnace.

The furnace was so hot that the men who cast the three friends in were burnt to death by the flames. But the three were not hurt in any way. An angel came down to them. A soft cool breeze filled the interior of the furnace. The friends walked about in the midst of the flames singing praises to God.

From this Nabuchodonosor knew that God was protecting the young men. He called them out of the furnace and said, "Blessed be their God. There is no other God that can save in this manner."

My Bible History - Old Testament #57

- The Babylonian Captivity

When Baltasar was king of Babylon, he invited a thousand of his nobles to a great feast. He ordered that the vessels of gold and silver which his father Nabuchodonosor had taken from the Temple in Jerusalem should be used. From these holy vessels the king and his guests drank wine at the feast.



As this great company feasted, drinking wine from the sacred vessels, a hand appeared, writing on the wall. The hand wrote a few words, and then disappeared.

Upon seeing the hand, the king turned pale and trembled with fear. He called upon all the wise men in Babylon to tell him the meaning of the writing on the wall. He promised, "Whosoever can tell me the meaning of these words shall be clothed in purple, and shall wear a gold chain around his neck. He shall be the third greatest in the whole kingdom." But no one could interpret the writing.

Then the queen came into the banquet-hall. She advised the king to consult Daniel, as Nabuchodonosor had done.

Daniel was therefore brought before Baltasar, who promised him what he had promised the other wise men, if he could interpret the writing.

Daniel replied, "God gave your father, Nabuchodonosor, a kingdom and much power and glory. Your father became proud. and so God took away all powers from him. But you, Baltasar, knowing this, have not been humble. You have lifted yourself up against God. You have used the sacred vessels in your feasting. Therefore see the writing on the wall: Mane, Thecel, Phares. And this is the meaning: Mane: God has numbered your kingdom and has brought it to an end. Thecel: You are weighed in the balance, and are found wanting. Phares: Your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians."

Baltasar was terrified. Nevertheless he did what he had promised, and rewarded Daniel. That night the king was killed.

History often tells us that those who profane churches or things pertaining to the sacrifice of the Mass are punished by God.

My Bible History - Old Testament #58 - Daniel in the Lion's Den

After the death of Baltasar, Darius the Mede became king. He also was pleased with Daniel, and set him over all his other officers.



Some years later Cyrus became king of Babylon. He too gave honors and powers to Daniel. Daniel tried to teach Cyrus about God. He told Cyrus that the false gods worshipped in Babylon could not help anyone. He said, "The God that I adore is the Living God. Your gods are false gods and do not live."

Beginning to believe Daniel's teaching, Cyrus allowed him to destroy some of the idols. At this the people of Babylon were made very angry. They went to Cyrus and demanded, "Give us Daniel, or we will kill you, and destroy your house."

The king was very much terrified, and so allowed the people to take Daniel. They led him to a den of lions, and threw him in to be devoured by the wild and hungry animals.

But the lions did not kill Daniel. They became tame as lambs, and did not hurt him in any way.

For six days Daniel stayed in the lions' den. Nobody brought him food, so that he became very hungry.

At that time, far from Babylon, there lived a prophet named Habacuc. He was one day taking some food to the workers in

a field, when suddenly an angel took him by the hair of his head.

The angel carried Habacuc off to Babylon, and put him in the den where Daniel was. At the command of the angel, Habacuc gave the food he carried to Daniel. Then the angel lifted Habacuc up once more. and carried him back to his house. In this way God provided food for Daniel in the den of lions.

On the seventh day Cyrus went to see what had happened to Daniel. How great was his surprise when he saw Daniel sitting safe among the fierce lions!

Calling his servants, Cyrus ordered Daniel taken out and his enemies cast into the den instead. As soon as the enemies of Daniel were thrown in, the lions killed and hungrily devoured them.

My Bible History - Old Testament #59 - The Return to Jerusalem

The Jews were in captivity for seventy years. But when Cyrus, king of Persia, became king of Babylon, he issued a proclamation allowing the Jews to return to their native country.



Zorobabel, a prince among the Jews, led more than 40,000 of his people back to Jerusalem. Cyrus restored to them the golden and silver vessels which Nabuchodonosor had taken from the Temple.

At their arrival in Jerusalem, the Jews set up a temporary altar, and renewed the Mosaic ritual of prayer and sacrifice. They then started rebuilding the Temple on the site on which Solomon's Temple had stood.

After about twenty years, the new temple was completed, and dedicated amidst much rejoicing. But the old men, who had seen Solomon's Temple, lamented because the new one was much less magnificent.

However, the prophet Aggeus consoled the Jews, saying that the glory of the second Temple would be greater than that of the first, because the Messias Himself would enter it. This prophecy was fulfilled, for Jesus later taught in this Temple.

Twenty years after Zorobabel's return to Jerusalem, Esdras, a holy priest, gathered together many Jews still remaining in

Babylon, and led them back to Judea. With the aid of his friend Nehemias, he instructed the people in the law of God.

Nehemias urged the building of the wall of Jerusalem. In two months the city was surrounded by strong walls as a protection against enemies.

In the days of Nehemias, Malachias, the last of the prophets, lived, about 400 years before Christ. Malachias preached against the hypocrites of his day. He predicted that God would reject the sacrifices of the Old Law, and in their place would institute a New Sacrifice that would not cease, "from the rising of the sun even to the going down." This prophecy is fulfilled in the Sacrifice of the Mass.

At the destruction of Solomon's Temple, the prophet Jeremias had hidden the Ark of the Covenant. In later years it could not be found. So in the new Temple, the Jews marked the place for the Ark with a stone, and performed certain ceremonies over it.

In this way did God remove the most sacred vessel of the Old Law. to prepare for the coming of Christ. For the Ark of the Covenant was only a figure of the Tabernacle containing the Real Presence of the Son of God.

My Bible History - Old Testament #60 - Queen Esther Before the King

Many Jews stayed in Babylon when their countrymen returned to Judea. Among these were Mardochai and the niece that he had adopted, Esther. The king, Assuerus, married Esther, and made her his queen.



In order to be near Esther, Mardochai used to stand near the gate of the palace. One day he heard two servants plotting to murder the king. He hastened to Esther with the news. She told the king, and the servants were punished. This event was written down in the book containing the story of the kingdom.

The favorite of the king was Aman, a very proud man. He wanted everybody to admire him, and to bow down before him when he passed. But Mardochai would not bow, wishing to reserve that honor to God alone. In revenge Aman resolved to have Mardochai and all the Jews killed. Mardochai therefore sent word to Esther, asking her to plead for her people before Assuerus.

At that time there was a law forbidding anyone's coming before the king unless called. If the law was broken, the punishment was death. Esther therefore sent word to Mardochai, saying, "Gather the Jews together to pray for me. Let everybody fast for three days, as I also will. On the third day I will go before the king."

It has always been the practice of the people of God to pray and make penance in order to receive favors from Him.

On the third day, Queen Esther put on her royal clothes and went before Assuerus. He was surprised, but forgave her, because he loved her.

Holding out to her his golden scepter as a sign of favor, Assuerus said, "Do not fear. This law is not made for you, but for all others. What is your wish?"

Esther answered, "If it please the king, I beseech you and Aman to come to a banquet that I shall prepare." The king promised to go.

That night, the king could not sleep. Therefore he ordered his servants to read to him out of the book of the story of the kingdom. It happened that the servants read that part telling how Mardochai saved the king's life from the two plotters.

Assuerus felt very grateful, and wished to reward Mardochai.

My Bible History - Old Testament #61

- The Punishment of Aman

When the servants read how Mardochai had saved his life, the king asked, "What reward has been given him?" But the servants answered that nothing had been done.

Just then Aman entered. The king asked him, "What should be done to the man whom the king wishes to honor?"



In his pride, Aman thought that the king meant him, and eagerly answered, "He should be clothed in the king's apparel, and be set upon the king's horse, and have the royal crown on his head. Let the first of the nobles hold his horse, and leading him through the city, proclaim: Thus shall he be honored, whom the king wishes to honor."

Assuerus therefore said, "Go, then, and do everything you have advised, to Mardochai the Jew." Aman had to obey the king. That day Mardochai received great honor, with Aman himself leading his horse through the streets of the city. How angry and jealous Aman was!

That evening, Assuerus and Aman went to the queen's banquet. The king asked, "What is your wish, Esther? Although you ask the half of my kingdom, it shall be given you."

But Esther only begged, "If you will, spare my life, and the lives of my people. For we have an enemy, who desires to

destroy us."

When Assuerus asked who their enemy was, Esther replied, "It is this Aman that is our most wicked enemy."

Full of anger, Assuerus called his servants. One of them said, "Behold, Aman has prepared a gibbet from which to hang Mardochai." The king commanded, "Hang Aman upon it." This was done, and Esther's people were saved.

Mardochai succeeded to the honors that had been given Aman. Laws against the Jews were withdrawn, and many turned from adoration of idols to the worship of the true God.

Esther was a type of the Blessed Virgin Mary, who intercedes for us with Almighty God. As Esther was freed from the rigors of the law, so Mary was freed from all stain of original sin, which is the lot of the rest of mankind. As the King said, "This law is not for you, but for all others."

My Bible History - Old Testament #62

- Eleazar, Man of Fortitude /

Martyrdom of Seven Brethren and

Their Mother

From Zorobabel to the coming of Christ the Jews were at different times governed by Persia, Greece, Egypt, Syria, and Rome. Still the high priests were the immediate rulers.



Their foreign masters often treated the Jews very cruelly.

One of the these harsh rulers was Antiochus, King of Syria. He did not want the Jews to worship God or to obey His Laws. He commanded them to sacrifice to idols. Thousands gave up their lives, rather than break the Laws taught them by their fathers.

One of the martyrs was a 70-year-old man named Eleazar, who was beloved by the Jews for his piety and knowledge of the Law. Antiochus commanded him to eat the flesh of swine, threatening him with death if he refused. Now at that time the Jewish Law forbade the eating of the flesh of swine. Eleazar preferred dying to offending God. His friends tried to persuade him to yield. They even advised him to eat meats permitted by the Law, if only to make it appear that he had complied with the order of Antiochus.

But Eleazar said, "It does not become my age to pretend. Many of the youth may be deceived through my weakness. because of my desire for a little corruptible life. But by

departing manfully out of this life, I shall show myself worthy of my old age, and leave an example of fortitude to youth."

So he was put to death, saying, "O Lord, I am well content to suffer, because I fear Thee."

For the same offence, a mother and her seven sons underwent a death preceded by the most cruel torture. One after the other, Antiochus had the brothers tortured in the presence of the rest. But all met their death with fortitude. The oldest said, "We are ready to die rather than break the Laws of God." The second said, "The King of the world will raise us up, who die for His laws, in the resurrection."

The other brothers died as valiantly. Finally, the mother, who had trained her sons in this saintly fortitude, was also put to death.

My Bible History - Old Testament #63 - Mathathias and Judas Machebeus

During the rule of Antiochus, there lived in Judea a priest named Mathathias. He and his five sons were aroused by the evils committed by the King, and resolved to deliver their people from the Syrians.



Mathathias cried out, "Let everyone that has zeal for the Law follow me!" He and his sons fled to the mountains where many Jews joined them. Finally they attacked the army of Antiochus, and destroyed the idols he had set up.

Mathathias was a good father as well as a good leader for his people. When he was near death, he called his sons, to say, "My sons, be zealous for the Law. Give your lives for the Law of your fathers. None who trust in God perish." Then blessing them, he died. All Israel mourned his death, for he was a great leader.

At the death of Mathathias, his son Judas became the leader of the Jews. Because of his bravery, Judas was called Machabeus. He continued the attacks began by his father against the foreign rulers. One after another he defeated the Syrian generals sent by Antiochus. Once a great army was sent against him, and his men were afraid because they were few. But Judas said, "Fear not; the Lord Himself will overthrow them before our face."

Finally Judas and his followers took Jerusalem. The Syrians had defiled the Temple; and so Judas again purified it and consecrated the altar.

Antiochus was furious that his armies had been defeated and he had lost possession of Judea. Gathering a big army, he led it against Jerusalem. He was firmly resolved to destroy the city and all its people. But on the way he fell from his chariot and hurt himself. He was also stricken with a terrible plague of worms.

Antiochus, knowing that he was being punished by God, pretended to be humble. He even promised to make amends for the evils he had committed. His repentance, however, was insincere. After many terrible torments, he died.

No power on earth can prevail against the works of God. Many powerful rulers have striven to destroy the Church of God, but sooner or later they have been punished by God, as Antiochus was punished.

My Bible History - Old Testament #64 - The Promise of the Redeemer

After the death of Antiochus, his son tried to reconquer Judea. The Jews under Judas Machabeus set out to oppose him. As the battle raged, there appeared a horseman going before them, clothed in white, with golden armor, and holding a spear. The Jews blessed the merciful Lord, and took on great courage,



because they knew they had a helper from heaven. Rushing violently upon the Syrians, they defeated them with great slaughter. The Syrians who were not killed turned and fled in fear.

Finally, after many battles, Judas won the freedom of his country from foreigners. At his death his brothers became the rulers.

There was peace in Judea for many years. The land began to flourish once more. But later rulers turned away from God. Many of the people disobeyed God's laws. They said that they believed in the True God. They said that they loved Him. They were very careful to keep the different forms ordered by the Law. But in their hearts they were wicked, and denied God. They did not really love Him.

The Jews forgot the Lord Who had revealed Himself and done wonderful things for them. Outside of Judea, people everywhere also lived in sin. They worshipped idols, and adored

false gods. Their hearts were full of wickedness, and they committed much evil. There was need of One to show mankind the true way. There was great need for the fulfillment of the many prophecies, and of the promise made by Jacob to his son Juda. This promise was that a Saviour, the Messias, would come to redeem mankind from sin.

Finally the Jews quarreled even among themselves. The Roman armies came to take control of everything. The Jews became a subject people in their own land.

Herod, a foreigner, was made king. The Kingdom of Judea was no more. No ruler came from the tribe of Judea to rule his people. Jacob had foretold: "The scepter shall not be taken away from Juda till He come that is to be sent and He shall be the Expectation of Nations." This was the time when Our Lord Jesus Christ came to teach, to bless, and to save mankind.

About This eBook

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